Trends in Buddhist Studies Amongst Western Scholars

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Compiled by Michael S. Drummond

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The Beginnings of the Buddhist Society

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Mary Stewart

This Buddhist Society did not begin its life as *the* Buddhist Society, one already existed, but was founded as "a Lodge of the Theosophical Society", so wrote Christmas Humphreys ("The Buddhist Society a Brief History," *The Middle Way*, November 1974, p.8). The Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland had come into existence in 1908, intended as a base of operations for the English Bhikkhu, Ananda Metteyya (Allan Bennett). English Buddhism then was an admixture of Ceylonese Theravada and Theosophy. Mr. Humphreys had first encountered Buddhist teachings through reading Ananda Coomaraswamy, and Theosophy through the works of Mme. Blavatsky. Francis Payne, who was struggling to continue the work of the Venerable Ananda Metteyya following his death in 1923, and "disliked Theosophy as then taught", in 1924 joined with TCH and his wife and others to create a Buddhist Lodge, the purpose being, in effect, to blend the teachings and then "to publish and make known the principles of Buddhism, and to encourage the study and practice of these principles".

Shortly thereafter the Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala, founder of the Maha Bodhi Society in 1891, arrived in London to found a branch. In 1926 the Buddhist Lodge separated itself from the Theosophical Society "on the ground that in our view its activities were then encrusted with peripheral organizations to the exclusion of the great teaching given to Mme. Blavatsky by her masters in Tibet". (p. 9) In line with its purpose and its new status, the Lodge began publishing its own journal, ***Buddhism in England***.

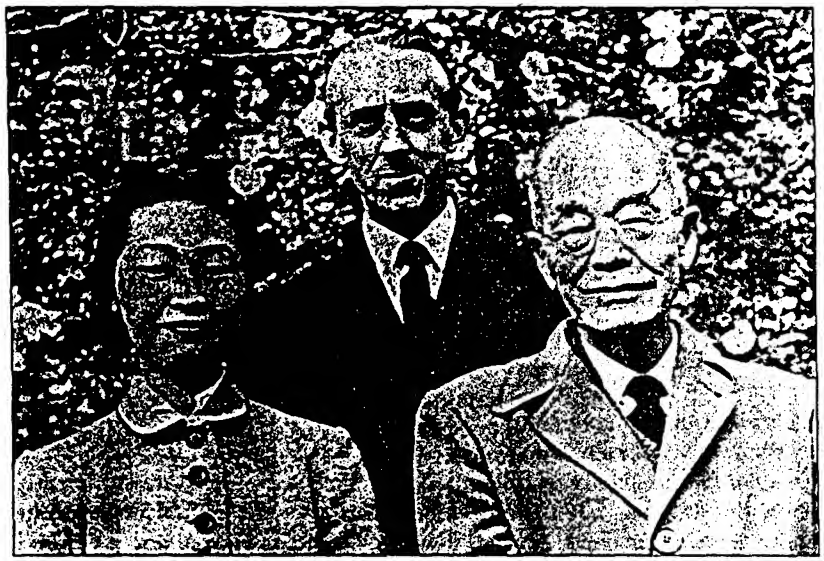
Its first editor was A. C. March. The initial price was 7/6 per annum, and its content was professed to be based on the Theosophy of H. P. Blavatsky. The Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala contributed an article entitled,"What Buddhism is Not ". The earliest contributions of a non-theosophical nature were essentially articles on Theravada Buddhism by March, Mrs. Caroline Rhys Davids, Dr. W. Stede, Ada W. Walsh, Christmas Humphreys, and various Theravada Bhikkhus.

By May 1929 Mr. March was able to perform his editorial duties full time, announcing that the primary purpose of the journal was "to be a means of introducing a knowledge of the Dhamma in the West". (***Buddhism in England***, Vol. 4., No. 1, p. 18.) Finding contributors who were sufficiently knowledgable was not an easy task. But slowly the journal began to be known outside England. Articles by a Shin priest in Hawaii and a Chinese master appeared along side those of Ceylonese monks and European Buddhists. Articles of a distinctly didactic nature filled its pages; a glossary

of Buddhist terms appeared; texts of lectures given by members of the Society, or by noted Buddhists for Society functions, were published. Humphreys began to write and publish for the Lodge his own books as primers for all those interested in studying Buddhism.

When March retired in 1936, his post was filled by a very young and enthusiastic Alan Watts for two years and then by Clare Cameron for the next ten. Watts' editorship coincided with the World Congress of Faiths convention in London, an event which brought Dr. D. T. Suzuki and Krishnamurti to London. Dr. Suzuki had already allowed the journal to publish abridged parts of his *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism* published in 1907 but out of print (May 1930 to to September 1933), and paid a visit to the Lodge in 1936 (noted in Vol. 11, No. 3, September- October, 66-69). There can be no doubt that Christmas Humphreys and Alan Watts were influenced by Suzuki's lucid and precise writings on Zen. (The late John Snelling, also an editor of *The Middle Way*, edited two books on Watts' early writings which deserve perusal with regard to the extent of Watts' output at this time.) Dr. Suzuki and his American wife, Beatrice Lane Suzuki, herself a distinguished Buddhist scholar, were often contributors.

The Buddhist Lodge became The Buddhist Society in 1943 and the journal became *The Middle Way*. Cyril Moore, Carlo Robbins, Marianne Winder, Muriel Daw were subsequent editors until 1967 when Derek Southall assumed the responsibility. He was followed in 1975 by Anne



Dr. D. T. Suzuki, Miss Mihoko Okamura and our Founder-President Mr. Christmas Humphreys in 1958

Dr. I. B. Horner with H. E. Dr. G. P. Malasekera after receiving her Degree of Doctor of letters of the University of Ceylon.

Bancroft and Philip Eden, who in turn were followed by Paul Ingram (1977), Ronald Cohen (1979), John Snelling from 1980 - 1988. The journal continued in its original purpose, over the years incorporating Zen, the Pure Land Schools, Tibetan, Chinese and Korean Dhamma teachings.

Some of the other early contributors are now familiar names in the world of Buddhist study: Venerable Ananda Metteyya, B. C. Law, Alexandra David-Neel, I. B. Horner, Venerable Narada Thera, Venerable Nyanaponika, Stella Kramrish, Lama Anagarika Govinda, Edward Conze, W.J. Gabb, Wei Wu Wei, Bhikkhu Thattila, Francis Story. More recent ones included Douglas Harding, Phiroz Mehta, David Snellgrove, Eric Cheetham, Mike Hookham, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Chime Rinpoche, Trevor Leggett, Venerable Myokyo-ni, Jack Austin, John Blofeld, Herbert Guenther, Venerable Sumedho.

The Middle Way is now but one of many Buddhist journals available in this country as well as throughout the world. It would be fitting then, to be reminded just how recently Buddhist teachings have been familiar in the West by providing a few excerpts from Suzuki's introduction to his wife's book on Mahayana Buddhism. These are taken from an article that appeared in *Buddhism in England* as "A Survey of the Mahayana" (Vol. XIII, No. 1, May-June 1938).

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began to spread in the Middle Kingdom, one of the first objections raised against it is noteworthy as it most positively reflects the highly practical side of the Chinese mentality. As far as its theoretical foundation was concerned, it had something that resembled Laotzeanism. But the Buddhist practice went directly against the Chinese mode of feeling. The objection was that they did not work for their living. When they do not marry, they leave no issue, which means that their ancestral spirits are neglected and their line is discontinued. When they beg for their food, they consume the earnings of other people who have to work extra hours to support idlers, which means the wasting of national wealth.

The greatest figure, however, who made Mahayana thought really acceptable or digestible for the Chinese was Kumarajiva, who came to Chang-an in 401 when he was fifty-eight years of age. During the twelve years that followed, aided by his able disciples he translated thirty-five sutras and shastras consisting of three hundred fascicles. Those translations were later criticized by Hsuan-chuang as not scholarly nor faithful enough to the original, but Kumarajiva knew better than the critic, though the latter was a native Chinese and Kumarajiva a foreigner from Northern India. Kumarajiva was surrounded by many capable native disciples and understood how to appeal to Chinese mentality; he aspired to present the sense in such a way and in such a style as to be readily understood by his readers.. His translations were greatly admired by the non-Buddhist Chinese doctors, who were great stylists and rhetoricians. Even after Hsuan-chuang, who produced more literary and faithful translations, Kumarajiva's were not superseded by them. There are generally two schools of translators; the one is scholarly, and the other strives to reproduce the spirit. Hsuan-chuang belongs to the former and Kumarajiva to the second. Both are needed, as each does useful work in his own field.

After Kumarajiva the great translator and expounder of the Mahayana was Paramartha (499-559) who came to South China in 546, arriving in Chien-k'ang, the capital of the Liang, in 548. He was unfortunate in many ways and had to wander about from place to place with no fixed abode and with no royal patrons. But in spite of his hardships and constant sufferings he was able to translate about eighty texts consisting of more than three hundred fascicles. He was a scholar of the Mahayana *Samsgraha Shastra* by Asanga and its commentary by Vasubandhu, which is an authoritive work on the Vijnanamatra school of India. Paramartha compiled his own notes on them, from which a special school started known as the Mahayana Samgraha. It was not however until Ch-i (538-597) and Chi-tsang (549-623) of the Sui dynasty that the native Chinese doctors of Mahayana Buddhism formulated their own views of the Mahayana, basing them on the sutras and shastras. The ground for this had been preparing for five centuries at least since the first introduction of Buddhism into China. Hitherto it was chiefly

scholars from India who interpreted the doctrine for the Chinese. Of course there were many native followers who helped them carry out their work to a successful end. But the latter did not take any initiative steps by themselves; they were not intellectually strong and mature enough to open up an independent course of study. Chi-i is the founder of the T'ien-tai (Tendai in Japanese) school whose teaching is the development of the doctrine contained in the *Saddharma-pundarika*, and Chi-tsang is the principal expounder of the Shastras belonging to the Madyamika school of India. His is known as the San-lun school (Sanron in Japanese), as it has adopted the three treatises of the Madyamika as the basis of its teaching. It is practically an extension of the Nagarjuna Philosophy.

Chi-i was one of the greatest Chinese Buddhist philosophers. Without him and Fa-tsang (643- 712), the founder of the Avatamsaka school, Chinese Buddhism could not claim original contributions to the history of Buddhist thought. A religion is always kept alive by the successive rising of original thinkers and pre-eminently spiritual leaders among its followers. They push forward its movement and keep up its ever-enlivening power, however full of vicissitudes their history may be in the different countries where it is transplanted. Personalities are the life of a religion, and the value of a religion is judged by the personalities it will produce. And this is true in two senses: a religion must be backed by intellectually vital forces as well as by spiritual creativeness. A religion however spiritually inspiring and ennobling must be supported also by philosophy, while philosophy alone will never make up the vitality any religion may exhibit. Prior to Chi-tsang of the San-lun school, Chi-i of the T'ien-tai, and Fa-tsang of the Avatamsaka, Mahayana Buddhism produced many pious spirits during the five hundred years of its activities among the Chinese people, and the time and soil were well prepared for the growth of those native intellects who were able to build up their own systems for the interpretation of the creative spiritual impulse at the back of their religion. Buddhism thus became really Chinese, at the same time bringing out many treasures which were not discoverable in India.

It is to be remembered that the spiritual vitality of Buddhism lies in its sutras and not in its shastras so-called, which are philosophical treatises, and this is what we naturally expect of religious literature. Whoever the compilers of the Mahayana sutras may be, they are genuine expressions of the deepest spiritual experiences gone through by humanity as typified in this case by Indian minds. Those experiences thus dressed in the Indian imagination and its tropical terminology were to be made Chinese and interpreted in accordance with the psychological peculiarities of the people. Chi-i's T'ien-tai system and Fa-tsang's Avatamsaka philosophy were thus their attempts to transform Indian Buddhism really into their own. Thereby Buddhism is now made to yield up its hidden stock.

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EXCERPTS FROM

A Survey of the Mahayana

By Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

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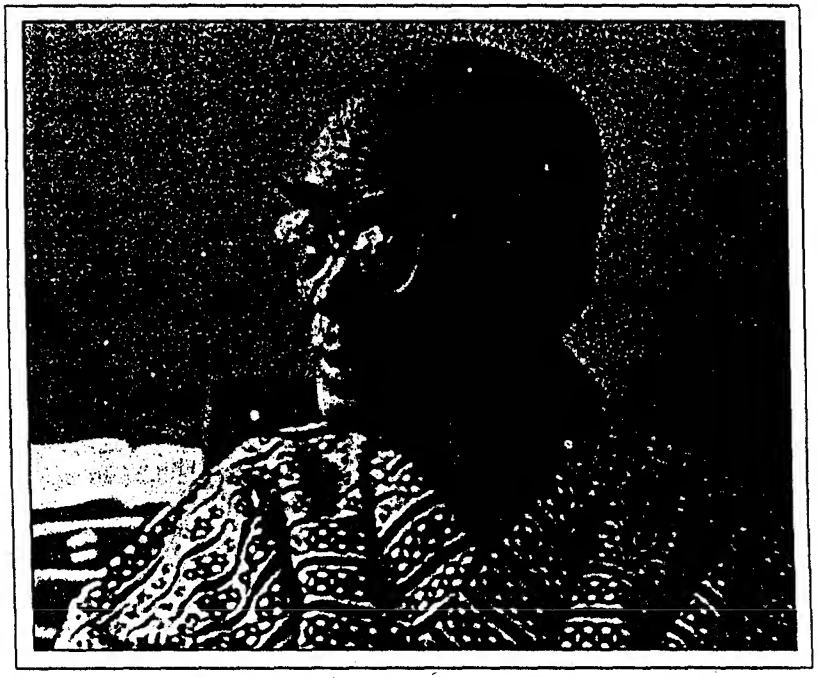
There are several reasons or rather circumstances which led to the neglect of the study of Mahayana Buddhism by Western scholars. The principal one of these is their prejudice against it, and their prejudice is partly psychological and partly historical. The West learned of Buddhism first from Pali sources, and its students concluded that Pali Buddhism is genuine, and that whatever other forms of Buddhism there may be in the other parts of the world, they do not represent the teaching of the Buddha. The first information of any event generally leaves a very strong impression and offers an almost irrational resistance to later corrections. Historically, Pali Buddhism has found many able exponents in the West, and its texts either in the original Pali or in translations are accessible, whereas the canonical books of the Mahayana Buddhism are written in Sanskrit and their translations in Tibetan and Chinese are almost beyond the reach of ordinary students of Buddhism in the West.

Another reason why the Mahayana is indifferently treated by Western people is that it is not so stereotyped as Pali or Hinayana Buddhism. The latter has ceased to make any noticeable development since it left its original abode in the earlier stages of its history in India. There is enough scholasticism in it, and a very complicated system of analysis too. Its disciplinary measures are rigidly formulated. Hinayana Buddhism is more easily studied, and more easily practised if one wishes to do so. But the Mahayana prevailing in Tibet, China, and Japan presents an infinite variety of form; it is rich in imageries and symbols; its doctrines are so contradictory, at least superficially; its philosophical background is hard to grasp; it seems to be so inextricably bound up with all kinds of superstitions either carried along from India or adopted in the new surroundings. In a word, the Mahayana being so mobile and adaptable and progressively-spirited, its own form is difficult to take hold of.

It was fortunate that the progressive nature and the ever-expanding missionary spirit of Mahayana Buddhism did not allow itself to be confined within the boundaries of its native land. While Hinayana Buddhism moved towards the South, the Mahayana opened up a north-eastern course until it came over to Japan, where it is now, if we can say so, recruiting new forces to cross over the Pacific. If the Mahayana had to thrive in India even after



D. T. Suzuki at The Buddhist Society

the successive rise of Nagarjuna and Asanga and other great Mahayanists, it had to follow two courses; the one along the philosophical route opened by them, and the other along that of extravagant symbolism where inchoate movements were already noticeable in the Mahayana sutras themselves. Either course was sure to seal up for the Mahayana the further course of healthy and profitable development, which actually took place. Neither the logical school of Nagarjuna nor the psychological school of Asanga and Vasubandhu made any further contribution to the thought-world of India, while the extravagantly luxurious imageries marshalled in such Mahayana sutras as the Vimalakirti, The *Saddharma-pundarika*, the *Gandavyuha*, ended in the rise of the Vajrayana with which Buddhism lost its original significance.

It is not known exactly when Buddhism was introduced into China; such events are not generally subject to chronological treatment. What is most probable is that Buddhism came to China about the time of the Christian era, or perhaps even prior to it, along the trade route from the Gandhara district, over the Sung Ling range of mountains, and via the south-eastern quarters of the Shin-king province of China. This was at the beginning of the Latter Han Dynasty or rather towards the end of the Former Han. As Buddhism

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began to spread in the Middle Kingdom, one of the first objections raised against it is noteworthy as it most positively reflects the highly practical side of the Chinese mentality. As far as its theoretical foundation was concerned, it had something that resembled Laotzeanism. But the Buddhist practice went directly against the Chinese mode of feeling. The objection was that they did not work for their living. When they do not marry, they leave no issue, which means that their ancestral spirits are neglected and their line is discontinued. When they beg for their food, they consume the earnings of other people who have to work extra hours to support idlers, which means the wasting of national wealth.

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Chi-tsang's Madyamika and Hsuan-chuang's Yogacara are fine works interpreting the ideas of the Indian masters for their countrymen, but by achieving this end they fulfilled their mission and there was no further development needed or possible for them.

But Chi-i and Fa-tsang carried on their intellectual elaboration of the two greatest Buddhist sutras produced by the Indian religious genius: the *Saddharma-pundarika* and the *Avatamsaka*. And just because of these sutras being worked upon and interpreted by the Chinese mind and not by the Indian, Buddhism has come to live in a new light, to display a new form of vitality unknown to India. This is the chief reason why in the study of Mahayana Buddhism the Chinese works are most essential. When the latter are adequately understood, the significance of Indian Buddhism or rather of Buddhism as a whole is grasped in its proper perspective.

As is later shown, when Chi-i and Fa-tsang, together with the practical appreciation by the Chinese and Japanese of the Mahayana, are understood, its message to the Far Eastern peoples and consequently to the world at large will be fully comprehended.

The teaching however would not have made such profound impressions on the Chinese mind if it did not go in company with Zen. Zen developed in China along with the Buddhist mysticism of Sunyata, partly spurred by the Laochwang idea of "doing nothing-ness" (wu-wei), and partly in accommodation with the Confucian emphasis on practical life. Zen is not, as is maintained by Hu Shih, a revolt of the Chinese mind against Buddhism, but its assimilatory response to the latter, and by the Chinese mind we must mean the Confucian mind plus the Lao-Chwangese mind. In Zen we truly find the efflorescence of this mind, otherwise how could it have influenced Chinese spiritual culture so unbrokenly ever since its maturity in the T'ang dynasty? It is true that Zen is not doing so very well these days in China, for China is at present at the cross-roads and puzzled where to direct her steps: but I am sure when she regains her equipoise she will know what to do with her Zen.

At all events we can say that Zen is the practical consummation of Buddhist thought in China and the Kegon (Avatan.saka) philosophy is its theoretical culmination. But, as I have stated elsewhere, in religion practical experience must go side by side with philosophy, and philosophy with experience. So in China the philosophy of Zen is Kegon and the teaching of Kegon bears it a fruit in the life of Zen. It was only when this perfect mutuality or identification was effected that Buddhism began to start a new life in the Far East, shedding its old Indian coat which proved to be no longer capable of keeping the inner spirit in healthy condition.

When I say Buddhism I mean Mahayan and not Hinayana. If it had been Hinayana which came to China and Japan, it is most problematical whether it could have undergone this rejuvenation. In all likelihood Chinese and Japanese Buddhism would be still in a state of hibernation.

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Ālayavijñāna – Walpola Rahula
MW AUG 1964
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Patience

Tenzin Gyatso
The Fourteenth Dalai Lama

MW FEB 1998
VOL 72 #

Serialized from A FLASH OF LIGHTNING IN THE DARK OF NIGHT: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, *by Tenzin Gyatso, The Fourteenth Dalai Lama. (Printed by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc.)*

In this chapter of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra,* Śāntideva deals with patience, which, together with meditative concentration, constitute the key aspects of the training in *bodhicitta*. The instructions in this chapter are very powerful aids to practice.

1 Good works gathered in a thousand ages,
Such as deeds of generosity,
Or offerings to the Blissful Ones –
A single flash of anger shatters them.

2 No evil is there similar to hatred,
Nor austerity to be compared with patience.
Steep yourself, therefore, in patience
In all ways, urgently, with zeal.

As a destructive force, there is nothing as strong as anger. An instant of anger can destroy all the positive actions accumulated over thousands of kalpas through the practice of generosity, making offerings to the Buddhas, keeping discipline and so on. Indeed, there is no fault as serious as anger.

Patience, on the other hand, as a discipline that neutralizes and prevents us from succumbing to anger, is unrivalled. Through it, the suffering we endure from the heat of the negative emotions is relieved. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we resolve to practise patience, gaining inspiration through reflecting on its advantages and on the terrible effects of anger.

Here, the term *positive actions* refers to generosity, making offerings to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas and keeping discipline, as is explained in the *Entrance to the Middle Way* by Candrakīrti. It does not refer to the merit gained through the realization of emptiness. Anger cannot destroy this type of merit. Nor can the anger of a lower state of mind destroy the positive actions accumulated with a superior state of mind.[1] In brief, there are two types of merit that anger cannot destroy: the merit of realization of emptiness and the merit of spiritual qualities that come from meditation. Apart from these, the good effects of all other ordinary positive actions can be destroyed by anger. Nevertheless, this depends on the intensity of the anger, on the magnitude of the positive action and on the person to whom our

[1] For example, the merit gained through the meditation of a celestial being, *deva,* in the realm of formlessness cannot be destroyed by anger arising in the human state.

anger is directed. In this way, a positive action can be weakened or entirely destroyed through anger.

Positive actions are difficult to perform and therefore do not occur frequently. It is hard to have positive thoughts when one's mind is influenced by emotions and confused by adverse conditions. Negative thoughts arise by themselves, and it is difficult to make our actions truly positive when our intentions and the way we carry them through are not perfectly pure. Our meagre stock of hard-won positive actions is rendered powerless in an instant of anger. The damage is immeasurably more serious than if we had lost something more easily acquired.

3 Those tormented by the pain of anger
Will never know tranquillity of mind –
Strangers to every joy and pleasure,
Sleep deserts them; they will never rest.

When people get angry, they lose all sense of happiness. Even if they are good-looking and normally peaceful, their faces turn red and ugly. Anger upsets their physical well-being and disturbs their rest; it destroys their appetite and makes them age prematurely. Happiness, peace and sleep evade them, and they no longer appreciate people who have helped them and deserve their trust and gratitude. Under the influence of anger, people of normally good character change completely and can no longer be counted on. They are ruined by their anger, and they ruin others too. But anyone who puts all his energy into destroying anger will be happy in this life and in lives to come.

7 Getting what I do not want
And that which hinders my desire –
There my mind finds fuel for misery,
Anger springs from it and beats me down.

When we think of someone who has wronged us or who is doing or may do something we or our friends dislike – depriving us of what we want – our minds, which were at peace just a moment before, suddenly become slightly agitated. This state of mind fuels negative thoughts. We think, 'What an awful person!' and our dislike turns into hatred. It is this first stage, this unsettled feeling that kindles our hatred, that we should try to get rid of. That is why Śāntideva says:

8 Therefore I will utterly destroy
The sustenance of this my enemy,
My foe, whose sole intention is
To bring me sorrow.

We should try to use any means to get rid of this initial feeling of uneasiness.

9 Come what may, then, I will never harm
My cheerful happiness of mind.
Depression never brings me what I want;
My virtue will be warped and marred by it.

10 If there is a cure when trouble comes,
What need is there for being sad?
And if no cure is to be found,
What use is there in sorrow?

We must make an effort to remain in a relaxed state of mind, otherwise this unsettled feeling will feed our hatred, causing it to grow and eventually destroy us.

Anger is worse than any ordinary enemy. Of course, ordinary enemies harm us: that is why we call them enemies. But the wrong they do us is intended to help themselves or their friends, not just to make us unhappy. On the other hand, the inner enemy, anger, has no other function than to destroy our positive actions and make us suffer. It is, as Śāntideva says, 'my foe, whose sole intention is to bring me sorrow'. From the moment it appears, it exists for the sole purpose of harming us. So we should confront it with all the means we have. Let us maintain a peaceful state of mind and avoid getting upset.

What irritates us in the first place is that our wishes are not fulfilled. But remaining upset does nothing to help fulfil those wishes. So we neither fulfil our wishes nor regain our cheerfulness! This disconcerted state, from which anger can grow, is most dangerous. We should try never to let our happy frame of mind be disturbed. Whether we are suffering at present or have suffered in the past, there is no reason to be unhappy. If we can remedy it, why be unhappy? And if we cannot, what use is there in being depressed about it? That just adds more unhappiness and does no good at all.

This initial disconcerted state, which gives rise to anger, is caused by things we do not want. For example, we do not want our friends or ourselves to suffer or to be insulted, criticized or treated with disdain. When we cannot avoid these things, we become sad. On the other hand, we feel satisfaction when it is our enemies who suffer such things and we are not pleased when things go well for them.

12 The cause of happiness comes rarely,
And many are the seeds of suffering!
Yet if I have no pain, I'll never long for freedom.
Therefore, O my mind, be firm!

In general, we have to make a great deal of effort to obtain happiness, while suffering comes naturally. The very fact of having a body inevitably involves suffering. Sufferings are numerous and their causes abundant. A wise person can achieve happiness by transforming the causes of unhappiness into favourable conditions. We can use suffering as a means to progress. As Śāntideva says, 'If I have no pain, I'll never long for freedom.'

It is only natural that we dislike suffering. But if we can develop the willpower to bear difficulties, then we shall grow more and more tolerant. As it is said in the text:

14 There is nothing that does not
Grow easier through habit.
Putting up with little troubles
Will prepare me to endure much sorrow.

16 Heat and cold, the wind and rain,
Sickness, prison, beatings –
I will not fret about such things,
For doing so will aggravate my trouble.

If we are very forbearing, then something we would normally consider very painful will not appear so bad after all. But without patient endurance, even the smallest thing becomes unbearable. Much depends on our attitude.

17 When they see their own blood flowing,
There are some whose bravery increases,
While some grow weak and faint
Merely at the sight of others bleeding!

Similarly, if we can develop patient endurance, we will be able to bear even great difficulties when they come our way.

To be forbearing means that even when confronted with great suffering or harm, we do not let it disturb our minds. Of course, it is difficult to regard sufferings as desirable and to transform them into favourable conditions. We have to be patient as we wage a determined war on negative emotions such as hatred, the worst of enemies. It is natural to expect injuries when doing battle with an ordinary enemy, so fighting the essential enemy, hatred, will not be without difficulty. But if we ignore all such ordeals and conquer negative emotions, then we can truly be called heroes. On the other hand, succumbing to anger and killing an ordinary enemy is no braver than stabbing someone who is dead already. There is nothing extraordinary about that.

21 Suffering also has its value:
Through sorrow, pride is driven out
And pity felt for those who wander in saṃsāra,
Evil is drawn back from, goodness seems delightful.

Our suffering also has a positive side. For one thing, we lose our sense of self-importance. We learn to appreciate the suffering of others, our compassion grows and we become more careful not to accumulate the causes of suffering.

Everyone has at least some unselfish tendencies, however limited. To develop these until the wish to help others becomes limitless is what is called *bodhicitta*. The main obstructions to this development are the desire to harm others, resentment and anger. To counteract these, it is therefore essential to meditate on patience. The more deeply we practice, the less chance there will be for anger to arise. Patience is the best way to avoid anger.

Now let us talk about love. In my opinion, all beings want to be loved. This is natural and spontaneous. Even animals like people who are kind to them. When someone looks at you with a loving expression, it makes you happy, does it not? Love is a quality that is esteemed throughout humanity, in all religions. All religions, including Buddhism, describe their founders above all in terms of their capacity to love. Those that talk about a creator refer to the creator's mercy. And the main quality of those that give spiritual refuge is love.

When we talk about a Pure Land filled with the presence of love, people feel like going there.[2] But were we to describe a Pure Land as a land of warfare and strife, people would no longer feel any desire to be reborn in such a place. People naturally value love, and they dislike harmful feelings and actions such as resentment, anger, fighting, stealing, coveting others' possessions and wishing to harm others. So if love is something that all human beings prize, it is certainly something that can develop if we make the effort.

Many people think that to be patient in bearing loss is a sign of weakness. I think this is a mistake. It is anger that is a sign of weakness, whereas patience is a sign of strength. For example, a person arguing a point based on sound reasoning remains confident and may even smile while proving his case. On the other hand, if his reasons are unsound and he is about to lose face, he gets angry, loses control and starts talking nonsense. People rarely get angry if they are confident in what they are doing. Anger comes more easily in moments of confusion.

[2] A Pure Land is a world manifested by a Buddha or bodhisattva in accord with the merit of sentient beings. Beings reborn in a Pure Land are able to progress swiftly on the path to Buddhahood.

22 I'm not angry with my bile and other humours,
Fertile source of pain and suffering!
Why then resent my fellow creatures,
Victims, too, of such conditions?

Suffering may result from animate or inanimate causes. We may curse inanimate things like the weather, but it is with animate beings that we most often get angry. If we analyze these animate causes that make us unhappy, we find that they are themselves influenced by other conditions. They are not making us angry simply because they want to. In this respect, because they are influenced by other conditions, they are in fact powerless. So there is no need to get angry with them.

24 Never thinking, 'Now I will be angry',
People are impulsively caught up in anger.
Irritation, likewise, comes –
Though never plans to be experienced!

25 Every injury whatever,
The whole variety of evil deeds,
Arise induced by circumstances.
None are independent and autonomous.

26 Yet these causes have no thought
Of bringing something into being.
And that which is produced thereby
Is mindless, with no thought of being so.

At this point in the text Śāntideva refutes the arguments of the Sāṃkhyas, one of the non-Buddhist traditions of ancient India.

27 Likewise so-called primal substance
And the Self, whatever it may be,
Do not come to being thinking
As it does so, 'I shall come to be.'

28 Non-existent, being not yet born,
What could therefore want existence?
Changeless, therefore resting always in its object,
It could never cease from being so.

According to Buddhism, there is no such thing as something arising

without a cause. Everything is conditioned by something else. The same applies to negative actions.

According to the Sāṃkhyas, there are twenty-five objects of knowledge, of which the principal one, the primal substance (*prakṛti*), is considered to be absolute truth: absolute, eternal, all-pervading and independent. All phenomena are caused by this primal substance. The Sāṃkhyas also postulated the existence of a Self, or conscious principle (*puruṣa*), that is also eternal and independent and that experiences the manifestations of the primal substance.[3]

Buddhism refutes the possibility of something independent that does not depend on a cause. Everything is interdependent. No phenomenon arises autonomously, suddenly deciding, so to speak, that it will manifest. If the primal substance were the cause of everything it gives rise to, then it would have to be produced itself. But as it is not itself created, how can it create anything?

Buddhism teaches that everything arises from causes and conditions and that therefore there is no such thing as an uncaused cause. If there were such a thing, then everything could be said to arise from nothing! Alternatively, the primal substance would have to be constantly giving rise to (causing) something. But as we can see, phenomena sometimes manifest and at other times do not. This is because the causes and conditions on which they depend sometimes come together and at other times do not.

If the cause were independent and able to create constantly, then of course its results would also have to be constant. Since the results are not constant, we can argue that their cause also is not constant: it is impermanent. If there is such a thing as an independent creator, which in consequence is alone and all-pervading, all its manifestations or results should be permanent. Belief in such a creator is simply not logical. As regards the permanent and unchanging Self, if it were indeed immutable, all its perceptions would likewise have to be constant and there would be no time when it was not experiencing them. Ordinary logic tells us that this is not true. Sometimes we perceive things, sometimes we do not. But perceptions would have to be permanent if the Self were an unchanging entity.

According to the Sutra of Interdependence, everything arises from a cause. But such a cause cannot be a creator who at some time or other brings the universe into being. This cause is by definition impermanent, and so must itself have a cause. Finally, a result must be of the same nature as the cause that produces it. If, however, we were to believe in a permanent cause, it would be quite contradictory to believe at the same time in liberation.[4]

[3] Details of Sāṃkhya doctrine are in T R V Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960).

[4] Escape from a supposedly permanent *saṃsāra* is a contradiction in terms.

The Sāṃkhyas believed that the primal substance manifests *saṃsāra* and that the Self, which is supposed to be a permanent entity, experiences happiness and suffering in *saṃsāra*. Through meditation upon the instructions of a spiritual teacher, the Self realizes that all phenomena are manifestations of the primal substance. With this realization, all the primal substance's manifestations dissolve, leaving the Self alone. This state is what the Sāṃkhyas considered to be liberation. All this is quite contradictory. If we believe that the cause of *saṃsāra*, the primal substance, is permanent, how can we explain liberation?

31 All things, then, depend on something else.
On this depends the fact that none are independent.
Knowing this, we will not be annoyed at objects
That resemble magical appearances.

This is why we say that all beings are influenced by other things, meaning their own emotions, and are thus not independent. The process of cause leading to result is due to the coming together of conditions. Nothing is independent. If we understand this, then the happiness and suffering we normally perceive as real and solid will be seen as something insubstantial, like magical illusions. In light of this, we should try not to be angry with anyone.

Some people may ask, if everything is an illusion, what is the use of getting rid of illusory suffering with an antidote that is itself illusory? The answer is that illusory suffering is the result of causes and conditions that are also illusory. Even though pain is illusory, we still suffer from it, and we certainly do not want it. The same is true of happiness. It is an illusion, but it is still something we want. Thus, illusory antidotes are used to get rid of illusory sufferings, just like a magician uses one magical illusion to counteract another. This is an important point, which is explained in greater detail in the chapter on Wisdom in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*.

33 Thus, when enemies or pleasant friends
Are seen to act improperly,
Be serene and tell yourself,
'This comes from such and such conditions.'

Let us consider that everything, whether friendly or hostile, is an illusory display and try not to react with either attachment or anger.

34 If things happened solely for our pleasure,
How could sorrow ever come
To any of the host of living beings?
For there is no one who desires suffering.

38 In the grip of their defiled emotions
Some there are who even kill themselves:
Though we may be destitute of pity,
At least we can abstain from anger.

If we all had a choice between happiness and suffering, no one would choose suffering and there would be no suffering in this world. But because everything is interdependent and subject to other causes, both happiness and suffering exist. People suffer without wanting to. And when the mind is not controlled, when we are influenced by hatred, we even harm ourselves. If we can harm ourselves with such hatred, we can certainly harm others.

39 If those who are like wanton children
Are by nature prone to injure others,
No use in being angry with them,
Like resenting fire for its heat!

40 And if such faults are fleeting and contingent,
If living beings are by nature wholesome,
It is likewise senseless to be angry with them –
As well be angry at the sky for having clouds!

We must be compassionate and never angry towards those who harm themselves. And when others harm us, we should check whether it is in their nature to do harm or simply something temporary. If it is in their nature, then it is no use getting angry with them. If it is just a temporary thing, then it is not their nature that is bad and they are simply harming us because of temporary influences. So again, it is no use getting angry with them.

If someone uses a weapon to injure us, the actual thing that hurts us is the weapon. What hurts us indirectly is the person's anger. So if we must be angry, we should be angry with the weapon or with the anger that is the reason for the weapon's use. Take away the person's weapon and anger, and there is no one left to be angry with.

Another condition of the harming process is one's own body, which is the physical basis for suffering.

43 Their weapons and my body:
Both are causes for my suffering!
They their weapons drew, while I my body brandished.
Who then is more worthy of my anger?

As everything is due to several causes, being angry with only one of those causes does not make sense.

47 Those who harm me come against me
Summoned by my evil karma.
They will be the ones who go to hell,
Therefore, am I not the one to injure them?

The wrongs other people do to us are the direct result of our past actions. These actions have in fact caused our adversaries to harm us. From this point of view, it is we who are harming our opponents, for in the future they will suffer because of the harmful acts we ourselves have instigated.

When others harm us, it gives us the chance to practise patience and thus to purify numerous negative actions and to accumulate much merit. Since it is our enemies who give us this great opportunity, in reality they are helping us. But because they are committing negative actions and we are the cause of these, we are actually harming them. So if there is anyone to get angry with, it should be ourselves. We should never be angry with our enemies, regardless of their attitude, since they are indeed useful to us.

One might therefore wonder whether, by thus causing our enemies to accumulate negative actions, we accumulate negative actions ourselves and whether our enemies, in helping us to practise patience, have accumulated positive actions. This is not the case. Although by practising patience we have been the cause for their negative actions, we actually accumulate merit and shall not take rebirth in the lower realms. It is we who have been patient, and that does not help our enemies. On the other hand, if we cannot remain patient when we are harmed, then the harm done by our enemies will be of no help to anyone. Moreover, by losing patience and getting angry, we transgress our vow to follow the discipline of the bodhisattva.

52 The mind is bodiless:
By no one could it be destroyed.
Yet it grasps the body fiercely,
And falls victim to the body's pain.

As the mind is not a material thing, no one can harm it. When others say unpleasant things to us, they do not hurt us physically. If we really think about this, there is nothing that is hard to bear. We may think that if we show tolerance when people say nasty things to us, it will be thought that what they are saying is true and the resulting damage to our reputation will hamper our success in life. But there is nothing wrong with that. However much fame and praise we get, we can only enjoy it for this life. On the other hand, if we get angry with others, thinking they are damaging our reputation and success in this life, the negative actions we thus accumulate will follow us in our future lives.

To be continued in the May issue of *The Middle Way*

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The Path of the Great

Sylvia Swain

"Watchfulness is the path of immortality; unwatchfulness is the path of death.
Those who are watchful never die; those who do not watch are already as dead.
Those who with a clear mind have seen the truth, those who are wise and ever watchful.
They feel the joy of watchfulness, the joy of the path of the Great."[1]

Enantiodromia is the name Heraclitus gave to the law which governs blind contingency...Jung identified it as the psychological law which says that sooner or later everything turns into its opposite, saying:

"The only person who escapes the grim law of enantiodromia is the man who knows how to separate himself from the unconscious, not by repressing it - for then it simply attacks him from the rear - but by putting it clearly before him as that which he is not."[2]

During this century we have been able to witness its effects on our Western culture, a culture which has supported its members in a false sense of security. Its high noon has passed and, as Jung frequently pointed out, at this point:

"the steady forward movement no longer denotes an increase but a decrease in strength."

We have reached a time when our traditional structures for the containment of the baser energies can no longer stem the tide of a permissive backlash. For all our boasted control of nature, we are, as Jung pointed out:

"...still her victims as much as ever, and have not even learnt how to control our own nature, which slowly and inevitably courts disaster."[3]

This law dominates the history of the world, an amazing story of the rise and fall of one great civilisation after another, a phenomenon also witnessed in recent history. The lesson to be learnt from history is that, for all the wonders and high achievements of these systems and civilisations, those responsible were quite unaware of this basic law at work in everything including themselves, and were thus unable to prevent their 'golden' ages falling into barbarism. The problem seems not to be that humanity cannot achieve the most arduous of its goals but that, through lack of understanding, humanity has not directed its energies to the achievement of the right goals. The first step on the Noble Eightfold Path, namely, right understanding, was not recognised as the goal to precede all other goals.

There is a point in the development of the ego at which it leaves its 'rightful' goal and pursues an unrealistic one. The development of egoic

1. Dhammapada verses 21 and 22.
2. Jung C. W. vol.7 par.112.
3. Jung C. W. vol.18 par.597.

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consciousness is indispensable, a legitimate stage on the path for developing independence, rational thought, objectivity, ethics and so on, but it has also a critical point, beyond which, it cannot expand without triggering the laws of its own undoing.

In Western mythology, enantiodromia is the province of Nemesis, the Goddess responsible for seeing that order is maintained. Clearly this law is a necessary last ditch safety-net for the preservation of balance and of boundaries between order and chaos. It is therefore necessary to find ways of recognising those perilous borderline states, and the Buddhist methods for bringing them into awareness and under control, thus enabling us to avoid the divine anger of Nemesis or, if we prefer, to avert painful Karma.

Firstly we need to identify that danger area in consciousness which pushes us towards the edge, and for want of a better phrase, I call it psychological sensuality. The physical senses have their own built-in safeguards which can set sharp limits to our overindulgences, but our hankering for pleasure has no safeguards, nor does the lust for power. Instead of being sickened by a sense of having too much, this craving only gets worse; the tragedy of the ego is that, once started it can go on expanding to accommodate any amount of flattery or power with no warning that it is inflating until Nemesis strikes. The ego has to learn to set its own limits.

Mindfulness and control are the lynch-pins of Buddhist practice. Did not the Buddha say that:

> "The purpose of the holy life does not consist in acquiring alms, honour, nor fame, nor in gaining morality, concentration or the eye of knowledge. But that unshakeable deliverance of the heart is the object of the holy life; that is its essence, that is its goal."

The Buddhist practice of setting up mindful awareness also accords to a large extent with the Jungian theory of types. There are three aspects of contemplation which they have in common; body, mind and heart and each is considered here in to ways: the extraverted mode and the introverted mode.

The Body.

In the case of the body, to call these modes the voluntary and involuntary areas for our mindful attention might fit the bill better. The voluntary body movements are the traditional place to begin and they should be the easiest things to deal with because the conscious mind is in control. From childhood we are admonished to look where we are going, to be careful not to spill our milk, or to tread on the cat, and so on. Firstly we have to learn the control and then ever afterwards we have to remember to exercise that control. We have been trying all our lives and are not perfect yet. Perhaps that is as well because if we are too good in this outward and visible area there is the danger of our building a persona from it impressive to our friends but behind which, nothing else is happening.

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Considering the involuntary functions of the body is much more interesting because the body has a volition of its own. We observe that, whereas the conscious ego uses a verbal language and an ethic of choice, all the unconscious aspects of our being use a symbolic language and an ethic of simple honesty. The ego can, if it chooses, become escapist, fixated, repetitive and live in the past; but not the body. Every day that passes, it remains in tune with such changes as accompany the passage of time; its origins are immemorial, and ancient wisdom is incorporated into its every cell.

In its deluded condition, the psyche is fearful and unable to cope with very much mental pain, and when it reaches the end of its tether, the body comes in to share the burden. Medical science is giving increasing recognition to this factor and, as we know, many even of the major illnesses are now believed to have a psychosomatic element. This ties in with the theories of repression and the law of karma in that, whatever we repress or refuse to face in one area of our being, rises up to face us somewhere else; but, instead of regarding these symptoms simply as morally causal, it may be more helpful to remain with our Western thought here and to consider them in the light of Jung's theory of synchronicity. This describes the possibility of coincidental events being linked, not by cause but by meaning and time.

There was that question Jung would ask his new patients: "why now?" This question can be profitably applied in the psychosomatic context making it possible to view the interaction between spirit and matter, between conscious and unconscious, using the symptom as a symbol of a neglected area and as material for necessary contemplation rather than a sign indicating inadequacy or of punishing karma. We may find that this perspective makes a significant difference to our feelings and attitudes, as it dispenses with regret and recrimination, and stimulates reflection and new endeavour. An illness or other setback can be a gift of time, time to reflect and to absorb the fruits of past experience, or to discover a new outlet, a new skill. Many things may obstruct our doing in this life, but only we can obstruct our being.

Finally, there are the body's postures and gestures which may be conscious or unconscious and which may be telling us something about our mental state, if not something about its own physical problems which should not be overlooked. In a extraverted society, it is not surprising that literature on body language, the outward and physical indications of psychic states, has become popular. If we seek first, for that 'eye of knowledge' spoken of by the Buddha, we may be tempted to limit our judgement to others. Real learning in psychology comes from and applies within, and we need to bear in mind that each person is also a unique individual and that the production of a symbol from the unconscious, whether via a dream or the body, always includes an element new and unique to the individual which the individual has to discover for themselves.

The Mind.

In the area of interaction of body and mind, there are various practices which our Buddhist teachers might suggest we try, such as mantra, mudra and prostrations; here, too, mindful awareness is the vital element; conformity alone cannot light the spark which transforms the bodily practices into a mental attitude.

As we move on to consideration of the two mental facets of our being, we would do well to note the very first line of the Dharmapada, which says:

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought."[4]

Our intellectually orientated system of education concentrates on the cramming in of as much information as possible on as many subjects as possible in order to fit the student to meet the demands of a competitive society.

That first line challenges our intellectual complacency, and compels us to realize that the highest values and broadest vision require far more profound and original thought than is customary.

In mental practice, as with the bodily practice, the objective sphere of the mind is the area for reform and training. First we should consider the moral precepts and let the mind explore their purpose and their consequences; ponder the beauty and application of them until they are no longer rules we obey but convictions we hold in our own right, watching the going down of childish obedience and the arising of personal responsibility. With such changes in attitudes and the patterns of our thinking, there will surely follow changes in personality and behaviour, and our relationship with the world around us will reform itself.

Then we turn to the subjective, inner world of the mind. Again, the act of turning inwards reorientates us, and we find a different function for the mind. Outwardly it thinks; inwardly it sees, and the practice here is to watch the mind, and to be aware of all that finds representation as thought and feeling in it; just as it is, allowing what will to come up, thus discovering the hidden inner life of the mind and the true motivation behind the scenes. It is important that we do not try to interfere by banishing, changing or censoring these thoughts that arise. We are learning to understand what makes us as we are.

In the Buddhist teaching, speech and thought are classified under the same heading, since speech is uttered as a consequence of thought. Therefore, to understand the origin of the opinions we voice is a step forward in self-knowledge. We tend to think that if we know what someone's opinions are, we know all there is to know about them. Likewise, we explain and describe ourselves to others in terms of our own opinions and

4. Mau[illegible]alshe reminds us that this is Max Müller's famous 1881 paraphrase, February Middle V[illegible] 216. Since none of the many renderings of this first verse are entirely satisfactory [illegible]ote the familiar one. Walshe gives "the dhammas (states, conditions) are preceded by mind".

preferences.

How much of all this is real? If we care to investigate, we may well find that we have acquired one or two quite automatic responses to certain situations. We can recognize them because they cut in like gramophone records at the appropriate cue. Such opinions are never original but are often just social or political packages with an idealistic bias, full of shoulds and oughts. It is easy to see why we fall into these habits; standard opinions elicit dependable, standard responses. We feel secure in relationships and conversations which are predictable because archetypal. If, on the other hand, we learn to take our Buddhist training seriously, and free our thought and speech from too many conditioned responses, we lose the bolstering effect of being "in the right" which such repetition provides. It leaves us on unfamiliar ground, far from home, lost for something to say, and at this point we discover the value of being strong in homelessness.

We need to feel this mental and emotional homelessness and to be able to live with it during the painful process of growing to our maturity. There is so much old conditioning to be shaken off. It follows that we need to look into the background of that conditioning. Our thought processes consist mainly of the interpretation of our experience, and we do not have to look far to see that the first category we use is that of good and evil. We come from a background in which our forbears tried to separate and encapsulate what they saw as the 'good' in order to protect and possess it. They longed for "goodness, truth and beauty' but, not understanding the nature of the psyche, they thought that this could be made possible by locking away the 'bad' and the 'ugly' and dismissing contrary views as 'untruth'. In the course of time this treasured but onesided ideal of grasping good by psychological force infiltrated into the collective psyche, unchallenged, as a value to be cherished, justifying 'holy' war, crusade and inquisition. So we have been left with an ethic of imbalance; an inbuilt unconscious instability presided over only by the law of enantiodromia.

In this way the ideals of previous generations become psychological burdens for their successors, who always inherit the unconscious shadow along with the ideal, both in the family and in society.

The Buddhist value of non-duality and the practice of mindful awareness show us just how arid these old ideals really are. We discover that there is no real substance in the 'mental formations' of previous generations, but the repressed energies invariably come up quite substantially in the next generation as a reaction to the empty morality that has been imposed and this accounts for the swings from puritanism to permissiveness and back again which recur with such monotonous regularity throughout the history of the world and which, unhappily, never solve anything.

But our deepest problems go back far beyond preceding generations; they go back, as is said in Buddhist parlance, to beginningless time. Ever

since the painful emergence of his unique consciousness, Man has had to maintain a running battle against the tug of the unconscious, luring him back to the old Eden, before the development of self-responsibility and the agony of choice. If he wins this battle, he is exposed to the equally strong temptation to rush headlong to the heights of detachment and spirituality. There is no refuge for Man in either extreme. Confronted with the painful awareness of his immaturity, of being neither completely innocent nor totally wise, his only viable course is that Middle Way, which is a centred way of gradual understanding and integration of all those physical and psychic energies which he fails to train at his peril - the peril of Nemesis.

The Heart.

When we come to apply our practice of mindful awareness to the two aspects of the heart, we have to appreciate that we are now approaching the real heart of our problem, too, and so the going will get harder. The objective functions of body and mind are, to a great extent, under the jurisdiction of the will and so, as we have seen, can be reformed. The heart is beyond the reach of the will, as we shall see, and here it may be more helpful to reverse our order and begin our observations in the subjective realm.

The heart ultimately, is the inspiration behind our aspirations because the heart harbours a mystery: the 'self'. It surely is our power house: when we give up in failure we say "my heart isn't in it" but when our heart *is* in it we can all move mountains! The heart's origin is hidden in the mystery of the unconscious; it is full of dynamic energies, the passions, with their desires and aversions stirring up fear, delusion, vengeance, avarice, envy and pride. Higher up the scale of the spectrum come generosity, gratitude, sympathy, warmth, compassion, love, devotion and self*less*ness: the paradox too is here in the heart. It is also the source of our poetic yearnings, the call of a distant voice, our "might-have-beens" described in 'Burnt Norton' by T.S. Eliot:

> "What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end which is always present."

The soulful longings and yearning for, we know not what, are perhaps the heart's first conscious stirrings towards its true home which is yet to be discovered: Nirvana. Ultimately, all the content of the heart is open to mindful awareness, once we have steeped ourselves in the practice, but its energies are so basic and powerful that they can engulf the mind and cause confusion if we try to be too analytical and so we need to find a simpler and more direct way to deal with them. As they are all expressed in feeling qualities, we might try to feel our way with them.

There are three such ways in which we can identify these energies at work: as emotional heat and cold; as feelings of rising and falling, our

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'highs' and 'lows'; and as feelings of expansion and contraction, our inflations and deflations. If we do not deal with them on a feeling level as they arise they will tend either to run away with us behaviourwise, or they may manifest as bodily reactions or symptoms, as we have already discussed when considering mindfulness of the body.

Let us take some quite common examples of these feelings: if we suddenly get some extra money, or are paid an unexpected compliment, we expand or say we feel ten feet tall. If, on the other hand, we are snubbed, or fail our exams, we say we feel three inches high, because we have contracted, or when confronted by an unpleasant duty, we 'shrink' from it. Desire we feel as heat, and fear sends cold shivers down our spines, or we feel warm-hearted or cold-hearted, while ascent or descent of the psyche is in direct proportion to our degree of optimism or pessimism, elation or depression, ecstasy or anguish. In other words, if we are attentive, we discover that our feelings are always on the move; there is plenty of energy when we are interested in what we are doing, but only tiredness and dullness when we are bored. For one reason or another, we are never really at rest and therefore the state of equanimity of the true heart escapes us.

But these observations point us towards the training that we need. For example, envy is like being stung, or as if the psyche were being injured in a scalding bath. In such conditions the practice of detachment is like a cooling balm. When we are cold with fear, dislike or prejudice, friendliness and compassion are warming practices.

In the West, neutral feelings are overlooked discounted as boring since they play no part in our pleasure-seeking games; but in Buddhism they play a stabilising role. Feelings and energies of pleasure and aversion stimulate the manipulation of psyche and the exploitation of the pleasure centres of the brain which should only come into play in appropriate circumstances, but stimulants such as drink and drugs are used for pleasure and this in turn activates enantiodromia. In our efforts to become aware of all areas of feeling, the neutral area is a place of rest and a place which enables us to make balanced observations.

When things have got out of true and we are carried away with feeling 10 feet tall or 3 inches high, we can use our imagination to visualise ourselves as moving to our normal height. It sounds crazy to have to imagine our reality but, what is actually happening is that we are adjusting our imagination which has sympathetically followed the ego/I in its inflation or deflation as the case may be. When we are carried away with a high or a depression it is very healing to imagine the mood as if it were something we can enclose in a circle, and then to move it gently to the solar plexus which is where our balanced, neutral feeling seems to manifest itself. We can then return to steady watchfulness. This practice is very effective, but there is one thing to be understood; the two states are linked. Emotion means to move out of, s

if we are to restore one end of the spectrum, the other will also be restored.

The Buddha said:

> "A monk, by getting rid of anguish, by the going down of his former pleasures and sorrows, enters and abides in the fourth meditation which has neither anguish nor happiness, and which is entirely purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This, Ananda, is the other happiness, which is more excellent and exquisite than that happiness."[5]

Clearly that other happiness is not an opting out of life or a stony indifference. We do need the capacity of the 10 feet tall and 3 inches high. We need to experience joy and humility, but we also need to avoid passing that critical point beyond which control is lost. That is the point at which the ego loses its mindful awareness and begins to identify with its inflated or deflated condition. Awareness and adaptation are two psychological skills which make for flexibility of ego functioning, which is its right function, to save us from the goddess Nemesis whose powers extend only to the unwary. When highly developed, this aware flexibility is the skill which enables Bodhisattvas to move freely through the realms.

There is one other kind of movement to watch, and this is the closing and opening of the heart. It is in a different category from the other movements which alternate, often quite quickly and which can be adjusted. The gradual opening of the heart is unrelated to enantiodromia and is strictly the outcome of experience and spiritual growth.

In the usual condition of ignorance and delusion, the heart is self-enclosed against others, because self-nature always manifests as the selective centre of an enclosure which tries to draw everything desirable to itself and protect itself from the rest. But when, through great endeavour and the attainment of deep insight, the heart is purified and open, there is, of course, no *thing* to be found in it. There never was.

Those well-known statements "there is no self", and "there are no others", both point to this truth; that it is only the closed condition which creates the deluded conviction of a small self-hood on the inside as one *thing*, and other-hood on the outside as another *thing*. Watchfulness reveals that we carry both poles of the dualities on the inside of our fence and so we have availed ourselves nothing by erecting the barrier. All we have done is to shut ourselves in with our demons! The only possible thing to be done, as all religions show, is to transcend them. And the place of transcendence? That, too, is the heart. Closed, it is the house of the "I want". Open, it is the vessel of Buddha-mind.

If we watch the mind for long enough, we can really see for ourselves how all our past life has been spent fluctuating between opposite trends, that the old values have been tied to that restless motion, never still, always searching. There is nowhere to be found any movement which could remove

5. Majjhima-Nikāya, Pali Text Society 1975, vol.II pp.67-8

the demanding I; no movement to end movements. Movement is not growth which is why it can never be our answer. Only in peace and stillness and watchfulness do we achieve that mysterious harmony which brings an end to conflict and ill.

The Buddhist practices for the development of non-attachment and equanimity are designed to bring us ever closer to the pacification of the emotions and the silencing of that voice which all our lives has been whispering into our ear: "I want", or "I don't want". When we experience that divine contentment, we see the end of craving.

It is not until freedom such as this is reached that we can speak in terms of any real change in the objective facet of the heart, because the heart, with its origins in the unconscious, cannot be controlled by willpower, which is a product of the conscious ego. Though it achieves much in daily life, all that willpower can do in the region of the heart is to repress and thus falsify or cloak our reactions. When the heart is open through the working of watchfulness, humility and metta practice, all our actions are naturally and spontaneously transformed. They reflect the joyous feelings of a delivered heart.

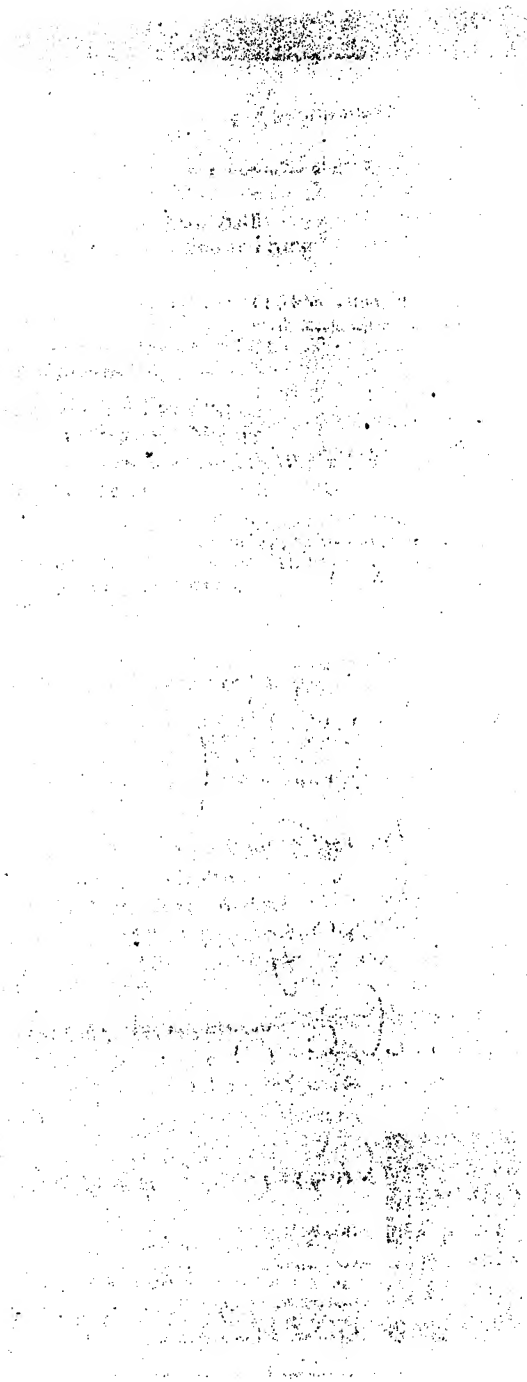
The finest thing that can happen to anyone is to reach their natural undistorted stature, and to find the whole person they were born to be. Or completeness is the only goal we have.

When Prince Gautama left his teachers and ascetic companions to go and sit it out under the Bodhi tree, he had benefited much from the teaching of others, but he looked always within, always at the real. He knew that, even with all the training he had been given, he still had not found the final answer to the problem that had driven him from home to the homeless life, but he knew that he carried that answer within him; that the final steps on that path of the Great Ones must be taken alone and unaided; that the ultimate cannot be taught or told, but only seen with one's own inner eye, and so, cutting off from every extraneous influence, he turned within to find the deathless or to die. We know the result.

The West now has access to a vast quantity of Buddhist doctrine; will we, true to form, plunge ourselves head first into it? Let us give the last word to Zen, through Torei's "Inexhaustible Lamp":-

> "The Buddha-Dharma still shines bright after nearly 3,000 years. This is not because of the profound teachings, nor because of the vast body of the scriptures, nor because it is held to by a third of the world's population, but because ultimately it is based on this enlightened heart as its root and spirit."[6]

6. Discourse on the Inexhaustible Lamp by Torei Enji Zenji, Zen Centre, London.



The Buddhist Doctrine of Non-Self

and the Problem of the Over-Self

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The early Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* has given rise to two main interpretations on the part of modern scholars. According to the mainstream view, *anattā* means the denial of a permanent self-entity, both at the microcosmic and the macrocosmic levels. However, scholars with a Vedantic orientation who tend to believe that early Buddhism is a systematic representation of the pre-Buddhist Upanisadic thought as well as those who believe in a perennial philosophy based on the transcendental unity of all religions, think otherwise. In their opinion, Buddhism believes in a Self (with 's' capitalized) which is not identical with any of the constituents *(khandhas)* of the empiric individuality taken severally or collectively, but which transcends them at both levels. This is what we have introduced in the title of this paper as the Overself. In this lecture we propose to discuss the early Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* or non-self and to examine, in the light of this discussion, whether the latter interpretation is tenable.

In our first lecture we observed that the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* is the result of a critical response to the mutual opposition between *ucchedavāda* and *sassatavāda* which seek to explain the nature of the human personality on the basis of a physical and metaphysical self. Stated in negative terms, this means that Buddhism rejects the identification of a temporary *(=ucchedavāda)* or an enduring *(=sassatavāda)* self in the psychosomatic complex of the empiric individuality. What this means in more positive terms and on what grounds it is sought to be established are the two main problems which we propose to discuss in the first part of this lecture. For this purpose let us first consider in which sense the term *attā* or its negative form *anattā* is used in the Pali suttas. An inquiry into the various contexts should show that it is used at least in four interconnected senses.

One sense of the term *anattā* is that which has no independent existence and hence that which has no substantial nature of its own. This shows the close connection between *anattā* and the doctrine of dependent origination *(paṭiccasamuppada)*. Since this latter doctrine maintains that nothing arises without depending on causes, it excludes the possibility of anything existing independently. Since the constituents that make up the human personality are described as dependently arisen *(paṭiccasamuppannā pancakkhañdha)*[1], it follows that within it there is no self-enduring substance or a self-entity existing by its own power.

The second sense of the term *anattā* comes into focus in the context of

1. Samyuttanikāya (=S.) PTS. III p.110

the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence. Thus in the Cha-chakka Sutta of the Majjhimanikāya we read:

> "If anyone regards the eye (i.e. seeing) as the self, that does not hold, for the arising and passing away of the eye is (clear from experience). With regard to that which arises and passes away, if anyone were to think 'myself is arising and passing away', (such a thought) would be controverted by the person himself. Therefore it does not hold to regard the eye as the self. Thus the eye (or seeing) is (proved to be) non-self".[2]

This same observation is made in respect of the other sense-organs, too. Let us take another example. Can feeling, for instance, be considered as the self? If it could be so considered, then, when a pleasant feeling gives place to an unpleasant feeling, one would have to admit that his self has changed, if it has not vanished completely.[3]

A third sense in which the term *attā* appears to have been understood is in the sense of an agent, an actor distinct from action. This is clear from the oft-recurrent assertion that such statements as "through sense-impression is conditioned feeling", should not be understood to mean that distinct from feeling there is an agent who experiences it.[4]

A fourth sense in which the term *anattā* is used could be detected from the Culasaccaka Sutta of the Majjhimanikāya, which records the well-known debate between the Buddha and Saccaka.[5] The theme of the debate was the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā*. Saccaka's argument is based on the premise that just as any kind of seed or vegetable grows and comes to maturity depending on the earth, even so whatever act a person commits, whether it is meritorious or demeritorious, depends entirely on the five aggregates *(khandhas)*. Hence he concludes that the five aggregates constitute an individual's *attā* or self. In order to prepare the background for counterargument, the Buddha asks Saccaka whether the King of Kosala or Magadha has power or sovereignty over his subjects so that he could put to death one deserving to be put to death or to banish one deserving to be banished. When Saccaka admits that this is so, the Buddha puts this question to him: "When you assert that the five *khandhas* are yourself, have you power over them, have you control over them, so that you can say: 'Let my five *khandhas* be thus, let my five *khandhas* be not thus'?" Saccaka fails to give a satisfactory answer and admits that he was sadly mistaken in this matter.

What is most significant for our purpose here is the way the Buddha sought to refute Saccaka. It is based on the observation that if anything could be called *attā* or one's own self, one should have full control over it. The same idea is expressed in a number of other *suttas* in a slightly different

2. O.H. de A. Wijesekara, Three Signata, Kandy, 1982, p.15
3. S.III, p.210
4. S.XII.12, 35
5. Majjhimanikāya (=M.), PTS, I, pp.227 ff.

form. We give below one relevant quotation:

> "If, for instance, the physical body could be considered as the self, then this physical body would not be subject to affliction;[6] one should be able to say (with practical results): 'Let my physical body be like this; let not my physical body be like that.' Because the physical body is not self, therefore it is subject to affliction."

This quotation also clearly shows that Buddhism understands attā as something over which one should have full control, so that it behaves in the way one wants it to behave. If something can be called my own, I should be able to exercise full sovereignty over it. This is the Buddhist definition of possession. What is hinted at is the idea that, since we do not have full control over our possessions, we are being possessed by our own possessions.

In fact, it is this same idea of *attā* that comes into focus in the logical sequence or interconnection between the three signs of existence *(tilakkhana)*, namely impermanence *(anicca)*, suffering *(dukkha)* and *anattā*. How the first two characteristics lead to the idea of *anattā* is shown as follows:

> "Whatever is impermanent is suffering *(yad aniccam tam dukkham)*; whatever is suffering is *anattā (yam dukkham tad anattā)*".[7]

The question that arises here is why the idea of *anattā* is said to follow as a corollary from the fact of *dukkha* or suffering. This should become clear if we examine the three signs of existence in their reverse order. When examined in this context, the following facts become clear: I cannot consider anything as my own or as belonging to me *(=attā)*, because whatever I consider so, is a source of suffering *(dukkha)*. Why is it so? Because what I mistakenly consider as my own does not behave in the way I want it to behave. Why is it so? Because whatever I mistakenly consider to be my own is subject to constant change *(anicca)*.

In point of fact it is this fourth meaning of *anattā* which, from the soteriological point of view, is the most important. However, it does not appear to have got due attention in the later schools of Buddhist thought as well as in modern writings on Buddhism. Perhaps this may indicate a shift of emphasis from Buddhism as a religion to Buddhism as a philosophy.

Now let us consider how the doctrine of *anattā* is explained in relation to the human personality. Buddhism seeks to analyse the empiric individuality in a number of ways, among which the most well known is the analysis into five aggregates *(khandhas)*. They are: *rūpa* (corporeality), *vedanā* (feelings), *saññā* (perceptions), *saṅkhāra* (mental formations) and *viññāna* (consciousness). According to Buddhism the whole world of experience is comprised

6. Vinaya (=Vin.) PTS., cf. Anattālakkhana Sutta.
7. Cf. S.III, Khandha Samyutta.

within them and therefore the totality of our experience could be explained with reference to them. Hence it is the view maintained by Buddhism that if there were to be any kind of *ātmavāda*, it should originate only with reference to these five personality factors. They are the only ground for the origination of such an assumption. Let us take, for instance, the fifth aggregate, *viññāna*, or consciousness. If it is to be assumed as an *attā* such an assumption could manifest itself in four ways: (1) consciousness is the same as the self *(viññānam attato samanupassati)*, as in the case of a flame of a lamp which is identical with its visual appearance, (2) the self possesses consciousness, just as a tree has a shadow, (3) consciousness is within the self, just as the scent is in the flower, and (4) the self is in consciousness, just as a gem in a casket. The other four aggregates *(khandhas)* could also be similarly considered.[8] Thus there are in all twenty possible relations between the five aggregates and the hypothetical self. This is how Buddhism explains what is called *sakkāya-diṭṭhi-samudaya*, the origin of the erroneous belief in a self-entity called *attā*.[9]

The Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* is intended as a remedy for the cessation of this erroneous belief *(sakkāya-diṭṭhi-nirodha)*.[10] This is sought to be achieved by the opposite process, i.e. by negating each aggregate as a self-entity, so as to eliminate all possibilities for the emergence of this notion. The final conclusion of this process of negation is that none of the five aggregates that make up the empiric individuality can be identified as one's own self.

The next question that arises here is that if each of the aggregates cannot be so identified, does their combination provide a basis for such an identification. In fact, a very strong argument for the possibility of such a conclusion was developed by a Buddhist monk called Khemaka as recorded in the Khemaka Sutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya.[11] As recorded here, this monk developed a proper insight into the nature of the five aggregates, so that he did not discern either a self *(attā)* or anything pertaining to a self *(attaniya)* in any of the five aggregates. However, he had a lurking tendency to believe that there is some kind of self in the combination of the five aggregates. This belief was based on the conviction that what was lacking in each aggregate can be found in their combination. The combination is endowed with what each constituent is devoid of. When we speak of the scent of a blue or white lotus - so runs the argument - we do not say that the scent belongs either to its petals, or to its colour, or to its fibres. The right answer is that the scent belongs to the flower as a whole. In the same way, when we speak of the self, we do not say that it can be discovered in the constituents of the human personality when they are taken severally. The self which eludes us when we seek it in each aggregate could certainly be discovered in their combination. This argument seems to be based on the observation that the whole is not the

8. Cf. S.III, pp.2 ff. 9. M. I, p.299; S.III, p.159 10. Ibid. loc. cit. 11. S.III, pp.126 ff.

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mere collection of its parts, but that it is obtained when these self-same parts are organized in a particular order, so that there is a qualitative difference between the parts taken severally and their organized collection which is the whole.

However, this conclusion, on the part of Ven. Khemaka, though based on strong arguments, did not qualify him for final emancipation. This shows that, from the Buddhist point of view, his conclusion was wrong. Why is it so? In this connection we would like to make the following observations: it is, of course, true that Buddhism analyses the empiric individuality into five aggregates in order to show that none of them could be identified as a self-subsisting self-entity. However, it is not asserted that the individual is a mere collection of the five aggregates, just as much as a wall is not a mere collection of bricks. What is asserted is that the individual is the sum total of the five aggregates when they are organized together according to the principles of dependent origination *(pañcakkhandhā paṭiccasamuppannā)*.[12] What is denied in Buddhism is not the concept of person which is called *puggala*, but a self-subsisting entity within the *puggala*, which answers to the definition of *attā*. Therefore, Buddhism has no objection to the concept of *puggala*, if by *puggala* is understood, not an entity distinct from the sum total of the properly organized five aggregates, nor a substance enduring in time, nor an agent within the five aggregates. The *puggala* (person) is the sum total of the five aggregates combined according to the principles of dependent origination and which are constantly in a state of flux.

In which sense, then, can the combination of the five aggregates not be identified as one's own self? Of the four meanings of the term *anattā* which we discussed above, let us consider for our purpose here its meaning as that over which one does not have full control or power. Considered in the context of this meaning, it becomes clear that the five aggregates, whether they are taken severally or in combination, do not behave in the way one wants them to behave. For one does not have control or power over them. Therefore, the five aggregates, even when they are in combination cannot be identified as one's own self. This it appears to us, is the reason why Khemaka's conclusion was wrong - a conclusion which prevented him from attaining final emancipation. Up to now we have come to two major conclusions. One is that each of the five aggregates cannot be identified as a self-entity. The second is that the five aggregates in their combination, too, cannot be identified as a self-entity. The next question that arises here is whether there is a self-entity over and above the five aggregates. This question is neither raised nor discussed in the early Buddhist discourses. Buddhism's silence on this question seems to be due to two reasons: one is that, according to Buddhism, the totality of empirical existence is comprised within the five aggregates *(khandhas)*. The second is that Buddhism does

12. S.III, p.210

not recognize a metaphysical reality, whether it is considered as transcendental or immanent which serves as a background to the world of sensory experience.

However, as we observed at the beginning of this lecture, this question is raised particularly by modern scholars with a Vedantic orientation and also by those who believe in a perennial philosophy based on the transcendental unity of all religions. The question is raised only to answer it in the affirmative. Hence it is that S. Radhakrishnan in his *Indian Philosophy*[13] observes that the above question is related to two other questions, namely whether there is an absolute reality exempt from the changing world, and whether *Nirvāṇa* is a positive being. Therefore he concludes that three questions are three different sides of one fundamental problem. He further observes that if the Buddhist answer to the first question is in the negative, then it inevitably follows that *Nirvāṇa* is nothingness. That there is no logical sequence between these two propositions is a question that we propose to discuss in our lecture on *Nibbāna*. Therefore we propose to confine ourselves to the first question: is there a permanent self over and above the changing aggregates?

Those who answer this question in the affirmative very often refer to the Sermon at Benares[14] in support of their interpretation. The basic assumption behind this interpretation is that when the Buddha says that the five aggregates are not self *(anattā)*, this does not amount to the denial of the Self. It only amounts to the fact that none of the five aggregates can be identified as our true Self, because they are subject to impermanence and also to what impermanence implies. The true Self is besides the five aggregates and could be discovered only by transcending them. For this purpose, the process of self-identification which manifests itself as: this is mine *(etaṃ mama)*, this I am *(esoham asmi)* and this is my self *(eso me attā)* should be replaced by the opposite process: this is not mine *(netaṃ mama)*, this I am not *(nesoham asmi)* and this is not my self *(neso me attā)*.[15] It is through this process of self-negation - so runs the argument - that one transcends the five aggregates and discovers his true Self. If the false self which is thus transcended, is subject to impermanence *(anicca)*, suffering *(dukkha)* and characterised by non-substantiality *(anattā)*, the true Self so discovered has the opposite three characteristics, namely, permanence *(nicca)*, happiness *(sukha)* and the fact of being the true Self *(attā)*. If man suffers it is because of his estrangement from his true Self. Therefore attainment of *Nibbāna* means "a positive return of the self to itself".

If this interpretation is valid, it raises the very important question as to why the Buddha was silent on this matter. Why was the answer to it left to be implied or inferred? It also raises the equally important question why none of the schools of Buddhist thought did not arrive at such a conclusion.

13. Indian Philosophy, London, 1958 (8th edition), I, pp.676 ff. 14. S. V, pp.420 ff.
15. See e.g. S.IV, pp.46 ff.

Therefore it leads to the most improbable situation that they all misunderstood the original message of the Buddha. It is also worth mentioning here that among all the schools of Buddhist thought it was only the Vatisiputriyas, who believed in a *puggala* (person) which is supposed to be distinct from the sum total of the five aggregates. As claimed by the Vātsīputriyas, this did not amount to the belief in a soul as understood by many other Indian religions. Yet for all, they came to be sarcastically referred to by other Buddhists as "heretics within our midst" *(antascara-tīrthaka)*.[16] Apart from these pieces of what may be called external evidence, there is internal evidence within the Pali texts which go against the theory of the Over-self.

In the Khemaka Sutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya,[17] to which we referred above, it is recorded that a monk named Khemaka entertained the notion of "I am" *(asmīti)* in relation to the five aggregates. Then the other monks who were more knowledgeable put this question to him: "As to this notion of 'I am', friend Khemaka, of which you speak, what do you mean by this notion of 'I am'? Do you speak of 'I am' as body or as distinct from body, as feeling or as distinct from feeling, as perception or as distinct from perception, as mental formations or as distinct from mental formations, as consciousness or as distinct from consciousness?" From the context of the sutta, it is clear that these questions were put to Khemaka in order to show the correct view, namely that the notion of 'I am' cannot be applied either to the five aggregates or to 'something' distinct from them. This clearly establishes the fact that an independently existing self-entity cannot be discovered either within the five aggregates or besides them.

Another argument that has been adduced in support of the theory of the over-self is based on the Discourse on the Burden-bearer, which occurs in the Saṃyuttanikāya.[18] It is interesting to note here that the discourse speaks of a burden *(bhāra)*, a bearer of the burden *(bhārahāra)*, the lifting up of the burden *(bhāradāna)* and the laying down of the burden *(bhāra-nikkhepana)*. Here the burden means the five aggregates; the bearer of the burden is the person; its lifting up is craving and its laying down is Nibbāna. Hence one who had attained Nibbāna is called *ohita-bhāra*, i.e. one who had laid down the burden. The fact that there is a reference here to a burden as well as to its bearer has given rise to the speculation that there is a person or a self-entity besides the five aggregates.

Yet another example that could be cited here in favour of such a conclusion is the Discourse on What is not Yours, which also occurs in the Saṃyuttanikāya.[19] Here the Buddha advises the monks to put away what does not belong to them for the sake of their own profit and welfare. The reference is to the five aggregates *(khandhas)* because none of them could be identified either as a self *(attā)* or as something pertaining to a self

16. Edward Conze, Buddhist Thought in India, London, 1962, p.124.
17. S. III, pp.126 ff. 18. S. III, pp.25 ff. 19. S. IV, pp.128 ff.

(attāniya). This seems to imply that, although the five aggregates do not really belong to them, there is something besides, which really belongs to them, some kind of transcendental self which is not identifiable with any of the five aggregates.

Now the question that arises here is whether these two suttas, which we have referred to above, provide positive evidence for the theory of the Over-Self. Are we to base ourselves on two isolated statements as against the vast majority which provide positive evidence against such a theory. We believe that this kind of statement should be understood in the context of the Buddha's own advice as to how his discourses should be understood. We refer here to the distinction drawn between two kinds of discourse as *nītattha* and *neyyattha*.[20] The former refers to those statements which have their meaning "drawn out" *(nīta + attha)*, i.e. to be understood as explicit and definitive propositions. The latter refers to those statements whose meaning has to "be drawn out" *(neyya + attha)*, i.e. to be interpreted in consonance with the fundamental teachings of Buddhism. As A.K. Warder observes, the distinction alluded to here may be interpreted in a broad way to mean the difference between the direct meaning and the suggestive or indirect meaning.[21] This distinction is so important that to overlook it is to misinterpret the teachings of the Buddha. Hence it is emphatically stated: "Whoever declares a *nītattha*-discourse as a *neyyattha*-discourse and vice-versa - such a one makes a false statement with regard to the Blessed One".[22] It is in this context, we believe, that the two suttas, to which we referred above and others of a similar nature should be understood. They should be approached, not as direct and definitive statements *(nītattha)* but as statements which need to be interpreted *(neyyatha)* in the light of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism.

Another sutta-passage which is often quoted by those who maintain the theory of the Over-Self is the one where a wandering ascetic called Vacchagotta asks the Buddha whether the *ātman* exists or not. In each case the Buddha remained silent.[23] This silence on the part of the Buddha, has been interpreted in two ways. According to Oldenberg it shows that the Buddha did not believe in any kind of ego *(ātman)* and if he shirked the question raised by Vacchagotta it was in order not to shock a weak-minded hearer.[24] On the other hand, Radhakrishnan says that he cannot agree with Oldenberg's view that the Buddha deliberately disguised the truth. He observes "that the logical conclusion from this would be that something is, though it is not the empirical self".[25] We cannot agree with this interpretation because, as recorded in the self-same sutta the Buddha tells Ānanda why he decided to remain silent when Vacchagotta asked whether there is a self or

20. Anguttaranikāya (=A.), PTS. I, p.60
21. Indian Buddhism, Delhi, 1970, p.110
22. A. I, p.60
23. S. IV, p.400
24. Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine and His Order, London, p.110
25. Radhakrishnan, op.cit., p.677

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not. We would like to quote here the Buddha's explanation as it clarifies the position we maintain, namely that there is no Over-Self besides the empirical self:

> "If, Ānanda, when Vacchagotta asked, 'is there an *ātman?*' I had said, 'there is an *ātman*, then I should have been one of those who hold the doctrine of eternalism *(sassatavāda)*. But if I had replied 'there is no *ātman*', then I would have been one of those who hold the doctrine of annihilation *(ucchedavāda)*. And if, when Vacchagotta asked 'is there an *ātman*' I had replied, 'there is an *ātman*', would it have been in accordance with the knowledge that all things are without *ātman?*' 'No, Lord,' If I had said, 'there is no *ātman*, the bewildered Vacchagotta would have become still more bewildered, thinking, 'then did my *ātman* exist before, and now it does not exist any more?'"[26]

Thus if any conclusion could be drawn from this answer, it is that Buddhism does not subscribe to the theory of the self as advocated both by *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*.

Let us now consider the problem of the Over-Self in the light of the Buddhist observations pertaining to epistemology. In this connection it must be stated here that Buddhism recognizes not only different means of knowledge but also different levels of knowledge. Besides the ordinary sensory knowledge indicated by such cognitive terms as *viññāna* (bare awareness) and *saññā* (sensory perception), it speaks of a higher non-sensuous knowledge indicated by such cognitive terms as *abhiññā* (higher knowledge), *pariññā* (comprehensive knowledge), *aññā* (gnosis), and *paññā* (wisdom).[27] If the first level of knowledge is circumscribed and influenced by our own subjective dispositions, the second level of knowledge is free from such such limiting and conditioning factors. It is through this second kind of knowledge that one is said to be able to see things as they truly are *(yathābhūtam pajānāti)*.[28] As to means of knowledge, Buddhism recognizes not only sensory perception but also extra-sensory perception. This latter means of knowledge is said to enable one to cognize things which do not come within the ken or ordinary sensory knowledge.[29] For our present purpose we need not go into their details. What matters here is the fact that, although Buddhism recognizes different means and levels of knowledge, it is never claimed that a permanent Over-self (the true self) transcending the empirical self (the false self) becomes an object of such knowledge. If anything becomes the object of higher knowledge, which provides a true vision and insight into the nature of reality *(yathābhūtañānadassana)*, it is the five aggregates (the empiric individuality), and not an elusive Self which transcends them. In point of fact, one theme that runs throughout the Buddhist

26. Translation by E.J. Thomas, History of Buddhist Thought, London, 1933, p.127
27. Cf. D. I, pp.62, 85; II, pp.81, 84, 91; M.I, pp.66, 84, 445; S.I, p.4; III, p.26; IV, pp.16, 51, 331; V, p.42; A.V, p.238
28. Cf. Ibid. loc. cit.
29. For a comprehensive account, see K.N. Jayatilake, Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge, London, 1963, chapter on Means and Limits of Knowledge.

discourses is that it is the five aggregates that become an object of higher knowledge *(Pañcakkhandhā abhiññeyyā pariññeyyā).*[30] Hence it is that to a question raised by the Buddha himself, namely: "What, monks, are the things that should be thoroughly comprehended through higher knowledge?"The Buddha himself provides the answer: "It is the five aggregates of grasping (=the empiric individuality) - so should it be answered".[31] It is clear, therefore, that, according to Buddhism, the object of higher knowledge is not a higher reality, but the phenomenal world. This excludes the possibility of any metaphysical reality which serves as the ultimate ground of existence, no matter under what name it is introduced: the macrocosmic Soul, the First Cause, or the Transcendental Over-Self.

Another aspect that may be considered here is the experience gained through the higher stages of mind's concentration. We refer here to the Buddhist teaching on *jhāna,* which recognizes eight (or nine) levels of mental concentration where each succeeding one represents a higher stage of the mind's unification. It is a process through which the differentiated mind gets gradually unified until it reaches a sublime level of mental refinement. The question that arises here is whether one who attains *jhānic* experience gets a glimpse of his true Self which was hidden to him during normal times. Can the *jhānic* experience be interpreted as communion or absorption with a metaphysical reality? In this connection we would like to quote here an observation made by the German Buddhist monk, Ven. Gnanaponika: "A fertile soil for the origin and persistence of beliefs and ideas about a self, soul, god or any other form of an absolute entity is misinterpreted meditative experience occurring in devotional rapture or mystical trance. Such experience is generally interpreted by the mystic or theologian as revelation of, or union with, a godhead; or it is taken for a manifestation of man's true and eternal Self".[32]

That Buddhism does not interpret the content of *jhānic* experience in a mystic or metaphysical is clearly suggested by the Anupada Sutta in the *Majjhimanikāya.* Here we find an analysis, made by Sariputta, of the nature and content of the experience obtained through *jhāna.* What is interesting to note here is the fact that the content of each *jhāna* is fully itemized, without leaving any residue for any kind of mystic interpretation. Thus from the Buddhist point of view, it can be psychologically analysed like any other mundane experience. What is more significant is the observation made that the mental constituents of each *jhāna* are said to arise in full awareness of the meditator: "He is fully aware of their arising *(viditā uppajjanti),* their persistence *(viditā upattanhanti)* and their passing away *(viditā abbhattham gacchanti).* Then he comes to the conclusion that these mental factors, having not been, come to be *(ahutvā sambhonti),* and, having been, they pass

30. S. III, cf. Khandha Vagga. 31: S. III, pp.83-84
32. Abhidhamma Studies, Kandy, 1976, p.10

away *(hutvā pativenti).* It is further observed that, since Sāriputta fully comprehends the constituents of *jhānic* experience, he does not get attracted by them *(anupāya)* nor does he get repelled by them *(anapāya),* nor does he get attached to them *(anissita)* or infatuated by them *(appatibaddha)* Without getting overwhelmed by them he thus comes to the conclusion that there is an emancipation higher than that *(atthi uttarim nissarananti pajānati).*[33]

Thus this account on the nature of *jhānic* experience establishes three facts: one is that its content could be fully analysed without leaving any residue. The second is that its constituents arise and vanish in full knowledge of the meditator. The third is the fact that it does not in itself constitute final emancipation. For, according to Buddhism, the *jhānic* experience, too, is impermanent *(anicca),* unsatisfactory *(dukkha),* and devoid of a self *(anattā),* conditioned *(saṅkhata)* and is of dependent origination *(paṭiccasamuppanna).*[34] These observations on the nature and content of *jhānic* experience clearly show that it cannot be interpreted in terms of mysticism or metaphysics, i.e., as providing proof for the existence of the Over-Self. In point of fact, Buddhism seems to be fully aware of the possibility of misinterpreting it on the basis of theological or metaphysical theories. This seems to explain why the meditator is advised to review the content of *jhānic* experience in the light of the three marks of phenomenal existence *(tilakkhaṇa),* i.e., as impermanent *(anicca),* unsatisfactory *(dukkha)* and as devoid of a self-subsisting entity *(anattā).*[35]

The next aspect that must be taken into consideration for a final solution to the problem of the Over-Self is the *Nibbānic* experience. This is an aspect which we propose to take up in our lecture on Nibbāna. However, for our present purpose, it is necessary to refer here to one important aspect of the *Nibbānic* experience. This refers to the position of the Tathagata, i.e. one who has attained Nibbāna, in relation to the five aggregates *(khandhas).* In the Buddhist texts, it is claimed that the Tathāgata cannot be comprehended either with reference to the five aggregates or without reference to them.[36] The first suggests that the Tathāgata does not identify himself with any of the aggregates or the personality-factors. The second suggests that he does not identify himself with anything outside the aggregates, i.e., something than transcends them, as for example the Over-Self. Both means that the Tathāgata is free from all forms of self identification. From this it must not be concluded that one who has attained Nibbāna identifies himself with Nibbāna, as is clearly shown in the first sutta of the Majjhimanikāya.[37] Such an identification according to Buddhism amounts to a serious form of spiritual bondage. In the context of the Buddhist teaching on *anattā,* the Upanisadic statement, namely "I am Brahman" or "Thou art That" is a form

33. M. III, pp.25 ff. 34. Cf. Ibid. loc. cit.
35 Cf. D. I, pp.137 ff; S. II, pp.210 ff; pp.217 ff; pp.276 ff. A. I, pp. 53 ff; II, p.126; III, p.394
36. See e.g. S. IV, pp. 379 ff. 37. Vedanta and Buddhism, Kandy 1978; Buddhism and Comparative Religion, Kandy, 1974.

of *asmimāna*, self-identification. According to the Buddhist view of emancipation, there is no emancipation as long as *asimāna* persists. This is clear from the story of the Buddhist monk called Khemaka to which we referred in the course of this lecture.

From what we have observed so far it should become clear that the Nibbānic experience, too, does not provide evidence for the theory of the Over-Self, a self that transcends the empirical self. That the ideal of emancipation as conceived by early Buddhism has no parallel to that of the Upanishads is a subject that has been studied by a number of modern scholars. In the context of these studies, Radhakrishan's conclusion that early Buddhism is only a restatement of the thought of the Upanishads from a new standpoint needs revision. As Helmuth Von Glasenapp observes it is of course true that early Buddhism and the Upanishads share many doctrines in common, such as Karma, rebirth and deliverance through insight. However, as he further observes, since these ideas were commonly held by a number of contemporary religions, such as Jainism, it is not possible to determine which influenced Buddhism.[38] The fact that the Upanishads preceded early Buddhism does not necessarily mean that the latter was a linear development of the former. For it is a well-known fact that in the history of thought new ideas could emerge not only as a further refinement of earlier ideas but also as a reaction against them, i.e. in dialectical opposition to them. In both cases the influence of what precedes for the emergence of what succeeds is undeniable. However, the difference in the two kinds of influence is also unmistakable. As we observed in our first lecture, Buddhism emerged, not as a linear development of either *sassatavāda* of *ucchedavāda*, but as a critical response to their mutual opposition.

This brings us to an end of our inquiry into the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā*. What is radical about this doctrine is that it provided a new dimension to the concept of the human personality and laid the foundation for a psychology without the psyche - if by psyche is understood a self-subsisting entity within the recesses of our mind. As Edward Conze observes, the specific contribution of Buddhism to religious thought lies in its insistence on the doctrine of 'not-self'.[39] In point of fact, Buddhism's other contributions to philosophy, psychology and ethics have all flowed from it. For if Buddhist philosophy seeks to show why the idea of a self-entity is a wrong assumption, its psychology shows how it comes to be, its ethics shows how it can be overcome and its final goal which is Nibbāna shows the final state where it is completely eliminated. This is not to suggest that the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* makes Buddhism either superior or inferior to other world-views. Ours is only an academic exercise, and the main thrust of our argument is to show where Buddhism differs.

38. Buddhism, Its Essence and Development, London, 1951, p.81
39. Buddhist Thought in India, London, 1962, p.110.

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"Thus Have I Heard"

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Maurice Walshe

Almost all suttas in the Pali Canon open with the words *Evaṃ me sutaṃ* ("Thus [was] heard by me"), usually rendered "Thus have I heard". These words are invariably followed by *Ekaṃ samayaṃ* ("at one time" or "on one occasion"), after which comes either *Bhagavā* ("the Lord") or the name of a leading disciple, and a statement of where he stayed or what he did. In fact these words "Thus have I heard" are so well known as an introduction to Pali suttas that Wisdom Publications gave this title to my translation of the *Dīgha Nikāya* which they brought out in 1987. More rarely, a corresponding phrase is used in Sanskrit texts, and in 1950 John Brough suggested, on the basis of Tibetan translations, that the words "at one time" referred backwards, not forwards, so that the opening of Sanskrit-Tibetan sūtras concerned should be rendered "Thus have I heard at one time" or the like. While this is doubtless correct as far as the latter texts are concerned, it is by no means clear that the same goes for the Pali suttas, and in 1968 O. von Hinüber *(Studien zur Kasussyntax des Pali, 147)* firmly rejected Brough's view with, I think, justification.

Now, in the new translation of the *Udāna* by Peter Masefield (reviewed by me on another page), we find for each sutta the curious opening locution "So was there heard by me on one occasion when the Lord (was staying, etc.)". This rather strangulated piece of English evidently harks back to Brough's theory, which one might have thought von Hinüber had sufficiently refuted. I think there are other, and decisive, arguments in favour of von Hinüber's contention. Here I would first interpolate a personal note. When I became a Buddhist, around 1951, I was professionally engaged in teaching medieval German literature. The first suttas I read, with their opening "Thus have I heard", at once reminded me of the Old High German *Hildebrandslied*, a heroic lay written down at Fulda some time after 800, and which begins with the words *Ik gihorta dat seggen* ("I heard that said"). This clearly means that the reciter is introducing traditional material handed down to him, and I have always assumed that the Pali formulation had a similar meaning (the commentarial idea that Ānanda used these words to introduce what he had heard from the Buddha's own lips is dubious, to say the least). Be that as it may, common sense suggests that *ekaṃ samayaṃ* ("at one time" or "on one occasion") makes better sense referring forward to the Buddha's activities than backward to the speakers recollection, where it seems rather pointless. And there are two facts which support the common sense point of view.

One of these, which is not perhaps quite decisive, is that in the *Itivuttaka*, the solitary Pali sutta text which does not have this formula, is replaced by

more elaborate formulation. Here, each small sutta opens with the words *Vuttaṃ hetaṃ bhagavatā vuttam-arahatā ti me sutaṃ*, which Woodward[1] renders: "This was said by the Exalted One, said by the Arahant; so have I heard". This formula is followed by the direct words of the Buddha with no mention of "on one occasion". While this elaborate formulation certainly supports von Hinüber's view, it does nor perhaps wholly clinch the case. The decisive argument is provided by a passage in the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (DN 5.21 = D i 143). The passage is well enough known, but its significance in this context seems not to have been noticed. The situation is this: the Buddha has just told the story of the bloodless sacrifice in olden times, and all the Brahmins present applaud (perhaps somewhat improbably!). Only Kūṭadanta sits in silence. He explains that he has noticed that the "ascetic Gotama" did not say "I have heard this *(evaṃ me sutaṃ)*" or "It must have been like this", but "It was like this or like that at the time" from which he correctly deduces that the events related had occurred in a past life of Gotama's. The implication is clear: "Thus have I heard" *(Evaṃ me sutaṃ)* was a standard way of opening a narrative the speaker knew by hearsay, not from personal experience. It also, I think, disposes of the commentarial idea that the phrase was Ānanda's in introducing the various suttas.

As far as the Pali scriptures are concerned, let us hear no more of "Thus have I heard on one occasion" or similar renderings. John Brough was a great scholar, but on this occasion he was demonstrably wrong, and so incidentally was Edward Conze, who somewhere expressed agreement with him, even expressing pleasure that one small point had been definitely settled. It has been, but not the way he thought.

1. *As It Was Said*, in same volume as *Verses of Uplift* (PTS 1935), 115.

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Sunyata-Emptiness Self-Emptying-Kenosis

Ven. Dr. Rewata Dhamma*

There are two main schools of Buddhism - Theravada and Mahayana. If one studies these two schools it may appear as though the fundamental teachings are the same, just different interpretations approaches and practices. However, if one studies them in greater depth one may find that they are very different one to the other and may not recognise that both come from the same teacher. When we are discussing Sunyata-emptiness of Buddhism and Kenosis-self-emptying of Christianity, these two principles are very important indeed and based on a profound philosophy. We need to study them deeply and to have dialogue one with another. I would like to talk about Sunyata as explained and understood by the Mahayana Buddhists.

Theravada Buddhism stems from the basic teachings of the Buddha and has an *Abhidhamma*, a metaphysical system, much earlier than the Mahayana school. Theravada teaches the Truth or reality that is within oneself, it is not mystical. One must investigate oneself to understand fully the truth of suffering and practise to remove the origin of suffering. (It accepts aggregates, elements and bases as existence or phenomena *(dhamma)* and we have to find out how they really are.) This kind of understanding is regarded as discursive knowledge or dualistic wisdom, though it has non-dualistic wisdom which one can realise or experience at the state of enlightenment; nevertheless one does not discuss or talk about it, because it is beyond our understanding and there is no word or language that can express the Ultimate Truth of Nibbana. Sunyata is defined in Theravada, as emptiness of self, i.e. Nibbana. (The Truth that will be fully understood through direct experience.) According to Theravada suttas Buddha discouraged philosophical speculations such as the origin of the world, creator God, life after death etc. because these are nothing to do with overcoming human suffering. The Buddha said that if you are wounded by an arrow, the first thing you must do is to remove the arrow. If you wish to know who shot it, from where and what kind of arrow, then you will die before you learn the answers.

Mahayana literature came into existence between the first century BC and second century AD. Some of the vast literature exists in India in the original language of Sanskrit. Due to the disappearance of Buddhism from India many centuries ago, these teachings remain as a philosophy of high esteem. Since the third century AD Mahayana Buddhism flourished and

developed in China. Tibetan Buddhism, generally, is regarded as Mahayana Buddhism, but truly speaking, it is not a pure form of Mahayana. Tibet received both Hinayana and Mahayana, and developed the very highest philosophy with Tantra. It is, therefore, more accurate just to say Tibetan Buddhism.

In this century, there have been some great thinkers in Japan who speak of religious consciousness and experiences and they have also made an extensive study of Christianity. I, therefore, would like at the end to talk briefly about their philosophies and understanding of Sunyata-emptiness and Kenosis-self-emptying.

Buddhism has, since its conception, strongly encouraged people to understand the Truth; it is, therefore, not sufficient for Buddhists to simply follow the ethical demands of their religion if they have not understood their justification or if their own conviction is not involved. The Truth must be realised through direct experience. Just as art does not need to justify itself scientifically, so too religious experience has no need of confirmation by science, because science cannot reach the state of wisdom resulting from religious investigation.

Nagarjuna (2nd century AD), who created an epoch in the history of Buddhist philosophy, gave it a definite direction. He propounded the *Sunyavada* (theory of emptiness) which is also known as Madhyamika school of Mahayana Buddhism. A greater dialectician than Nagarjuna the world has never seen. His great philosophical works were translated into Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese and Korean languages. His greatest work *"Madhyamika karika"* is the groundwork of his philosophy. He admitted that it is an epitome of the teaching of the Mahayana **Prajñaparamita** sutra and an exposition of teachings based on the law of *dependent origination (paticca-samuppada)*Pali. It displays a rare insight into the science of logic and unsurpassed flights of daring thought.

Here I would like to present Sunyata-emptiness as relevant to the Christian concept of the four dimensions of God's Kenosis: 'Its relation to creation, its dynamic of love,' its relation to the word of God and its trinitarian structure. According to Nagarjuna, Sunyata is not nothingness, but it is truth or absolute reality of things or suchness *(tathata)* of the universe. Sunyata-emptiness is not being as distinguished from beings, nor is it a transcendent God distinguished from this world, nor is it a nothingness distinguished from the somethingness of ordinary life. It is not to be found outside oneself, nor is it to be found inside oneself. If it were any of these things, or if it were found in any particular place, it would be a relative emptiness, not ultimate reality. Let us see what St. Paul wrote to the Philippians:-

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing

to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto, yea, the death of the cross".

Buddhism has been a religion of practices rather than of grace. I changed from the radical pluralism of Hinayana to the absolutism of the Mahayana. There was felt the need for a mediating principle between the absolute and phenomenal being. Buddha is that mediator. In **Prajñaparamita**, as non-dual knowledge, it is equated with Tathagata and as prajña he is identical with the absolute; but as a human being subjecting himself to all limitations, he is at once phenomenal. The relation of the Tathagata to the absolute *(prajña-sunyata)* is one sided; the former depends on the latter, and not vice versa. It is a free identity; metaphysically the Tathagata is a principle of lower order than Prajña. The Buddha Gotama is just one of those innumerable manifestations in the past and the future. Nor is Buddha different from the other beings. In essence they are identical with him. Every being is a Buddha in the making. The Buddhas were subjected to a six-fold process or evolution; they are multiplied immortalised, deified, spiritualised, universalised and unified.

In Christianity, one can also say that we all have an original union with God, given the creative kenosis of God as the ground of our being, and that we can obtain a realisation of this fact through a redemptive union with God. But there is a major difference here between Buddhism and Christianity. In Buddhism one can become a Buddha in the realisation of emptiness. But in Christianity, one cannot say that one can become Christ in the realisation of the redemption. Rather, this Christian realisation is a participation in Christ's redemptive kenosis. Therefore one does not become Christ in the same way as one can become a Buddha.

Prajña is not merely intellectual intuition or a non-dual wisdom but freedom as well. When Prajñaparamita, the absolute is identified with Tathagata who is its freely phenomenalised aspect, essentially a fact of religious consciousness, it is viewed not merely as the reality of all beings *(sunyata* or *bhutakoti)* but as a person endowed with all divine qualities and powers. The Tathagata serves as the principle of mediation between the Absolute *(sunyata)* and phenomenal beings. This is the logic implied in the admission of the Triple *Buddhakaya.*

There can be no religion without the consciousness of a being that is transcendent. There must be a relationship between worshipper and worshipped which provides not only fundamental unity but also the point for the differences that are relative. This aspect of relationship is emphasised by Mahayana Buddhism and Vedantic Hinduism. There is no difference between God and man. How can religious consciousness obtain without difference? The difference, however, need not be that of one thing and

another differing eternally in kind, but one of states or stages of the same being.

The Tathagata is a human manifestation, the manifestation of the absolute or sunyata or prajña in Mahayana Buddhism, likewise individual soul or atman in Vedanta philosophy. As this is a free phenomenalisation, there is no conceivable limit to the number, form and occasion of these manifestations. All beings have also the *Buddha nature*. Gotama Buddha is not the only instance of man attaining perfection. This is why Mahayana Buddhism is exemplified in the Triple body of the Buddha (*Trikaya*). Thus, the dual nature of the Buddha, as one with the Absolute *(sunyata)* and the other actively pursuing the welfare of beings, supplies the philosophical basis for the conception of *Trikaya theory* in Mahayana Buddhism.

The three bodies of Buddha are: *Dharmakaya* - the Cosmical Body in its essential nature; it is one with the Absolute; *Sambhogakaya* - the Body of Bliss; and *Nirmanakaya* - Assumed body. As the *Dharmakaya*, Buddha fully realises his identity with the Absolute (*dhammata* or *sunyata*) and unity *(samata)* with all beings. It is through his oneness with the absolute that the Buddha is enabled to apprehend the Truth which is his sacred function to reveal to phenomenal beings. The *Sambhogakaya* is the concrete manifestation of himself in the power and splendour of god-head. In furtherance of his great resolve to succour all beings, Buddha incarnates himself from time to time in forms best calculated to achieve this end: *Nirmanakaya*. *Dharmakaya* is the essence, the reality of the universe. It is completely free from all traces of duality. It is the very nature of the universe and is therefore also called the *Svabhavakaya*. It would not be correct to say that *Dharmakaya* is the abstract metaphysical principle of *sunyata* or *tathata* (suchness), but the *Dharmakaya* is still a person and innumerable merits and power etc. are ascribed to him. The *Sambhogakaya*, the body of bliss, is the reflection of the Cosmic body in the empirical world in a corporeal form, it is the *vibhuti*-glory of the Buddha. The *Nirmanakaya*, usually translated as an apparitional body, is really a body assumed by Buddha in fulfilment of his resolve to save beings from misery. The manifestation of the body of bliss in the empirical world as Gotama Buddha or other previous and succeeding Tathagatas is the *Nirmanakaya* of the Buddha.

Here is what Christianity says:-

"Creation is never from nothing, but out of God himself, creation is an act in which God communicates his own reality. In creation, God gives of himself"

God is present in everything that exists as the fundamental ground of existence. This ground of creation is the Kenotic love of God whose action constitutes the deepest nature of all things. Thus, creation as the product

of Kenotic love poured out through the creative Word of God, contains God immanent in all things. *Kenotic Christology* stated that there is a kenosis within the Godhead. The begetting of the Son and the spirit is a kenosis, a process of self giving to the other and this kenosis of love is understood to be mutual in establishing the unity of the Trinity, this is the way Jesus communicates this trinitarian life of divinity to humanity.

Most Christian theologians have often given a metaphysical priority to being over non-being. Non-being, understood in Christian theology, is typically held to be an absence of, or a privation of being. God is believed to be Being itself, creation is believed to be an effect of this Being. Apart from this, there is nothing, non-being. In Christian spirituality, these beliefs are substantiated in the experience that insofar as we exist, we participate in Being or God, for it is *'in him that we live, and move, and have our being'* (Acts 17.28). God-Being is also experienced as a fullness that fills all things. *'I fill heaven and earth'* (Jeremiah 23.24). God-Being is understood to be that creative source of all beings which creates, fills and sustains them in being.

According to Christian mysticism, Thomas Aquinas says that God as being creates beings as fire burns. In other words, creation is an ongoing process grounded in divine immanence. Now God causes this effect in things not only when they first begin to be, but as long as they are preserved in being, therefore, as long as a thing has being, God must be present to it. God is innermost in each thing and most deeply inherent in all things. So one can say - *"Lord! Thou has wrought all our works in us."* (Isaiah 26.12). Thus, Christian spiritual experience is that as we find God more deeply within us, we find ourselves more deeply within God.

A general expression of Christianity is that God is love, he knows us perfectly, and sustains us freely through his grace. They say it is God's presence within us that establishes our transcendental potential for freedom, knowledge and love. Freedom, knowledge and love take us beyond our limited self-enclosure, they are self-transcendent. As we are free, know the Truth and are able to love, it is God's original presence. Moreover, we are created in the image of God. That is, we are created images because we 'mirror' God and also because we have the potential to reflect back to God this freedom, knowledge and love. We can freely choose him, know him and love him as he has freely given us being, knows us and loves us. As Teresa of Avila says: *"in the centre mansion in the interior castle of our soul"*, we find the Lord of the castle, we find Christ, we find in him the love and healing touch of our Father, and we find the life-giving and life-transforming Holy Spirit. In this trinitarian reality, since our centre is the single centre of all existence, we find a deep compassionate unification with everyone and all things in God as immanent Centre and as fullness of being.

According to Japanese thinkers - In the absolute selflessness of pure experience, one finds the ultimate reality that grounds our derivative experience of subjective selfhood and the objective world. This reality of pure pre-reflective consciousness is characterized by spontaneity, unity and presentness. All subjective and objective realities of conscious experience are forms of this unified state of pure experience. The Self is the point where this dynamic of expression and unification occurs. At its deepest level, the self is only the "unification" of pure experience. Accordingly the unity of pure experience wherein Buddhism finds the oneness of reality as the true or original Self of all things.

In Zen religious consciousness, as a self-determination of absolute Nothingness, there is a point where there is neither self nor God as other, but a point wherein all things are just what they are. (Mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers). Therefore this point is the ultimate place in which all existences, subjective and objective are located. However, this point as the horizon of all things is not itself a thing, nor is it negation of things, a relative no-thingness, that is Sunyata-emptiness. The Christian concept of God can be understood in different ways; first, God can be conceived of as a 'being', as one of the forms of existence, as an object of faith. Or God can be understood as the unity of universal truth, beauty and goodness. But in both of these cases, God would be a derivative self-determination of the more ultimate Emptiness, i.e. more like the Christian mystical notion of Godhead.

According to Nishida (1870-1945), the great Japanese thinker of this century, the absolute, be it emptiness or God, cannot be a particular being opposed to other beings. "*Yet when related to that which is objective to it, it is not the absolute, but merely relative as well*". What is truly absolute is what is not merely transcendent to everything else. Emptiness can be such an absolute because it expresses itself through self-determination that negates itself as other. So given this kenosis, or self-emptying, emptiness is identified with all of the things of the world, including ourselves, which it contains paradoxically within itself, within its own self-negation, within its own kenosis. Emptiness, therefore is not a being, it is all forms of existence. The true absolute does not oppose the relative, the true emptiness as formless does not oppose its forms; and the true god does not oppose the world, accordingly "*A God merely transcendent and self-sufficient would not be a true God*", in St. Paul's words "*God must always empty himself*". That God is transcendent and at the same time immanent is the paradox of God. This is the true absolute where so they open, said Nishida.

Absolute Nothingness is the ground of a life of true compassion. This emptiness is a matrix of unification in which one finds a religious

compassion for, and unity with, others and all creation. There is true compassion lived in the field of the unity of absolute nothingness. In this way compassion of emptiness is not just to be contemplated but lived. Just as emptiness empties itself in compassion, a person grounded in the unity of emptiness can be emptied in compassionate concern for, and identification with others. The word of God is found within the word as a kenotic reality wherein one finds the love of God. Nishida says that we can live a true life of compassion through this love. This love is not something that results from human will, but it stems from the absolute source of our existence through the word of God. Nishida recognizes a parallel to the idea of the word of God in the **Pure Land Buddhist** tradition. In the Pure Land of Buddhism this word of God reality is expressed *"by the name of Buddha"*. In Buddhism the name of Buddha is identified with the Buddha, so too, in Christianity the Word is identified with God. However the Japanese thinker understood a difference between the Word of God and the name of the Buddha.

In Christianity the Word is most often understood as transcendent, personal and carries a sense of judgement, while in Buddhism the name of Buddha always expresses an immanent embracement that is infinite compassion.

The Buddha said "*Who sees the Dhamma, sees me; Who sees me, sees the Dhamma*". What one sees in the Buddha is the historical self-realisation of the eternal Dhamma. The Buddha is the model for the existential realisation of emptiness. He is the realisation of emptiness in the pure clarity of his wisdom, and he is the functioning of emptiness in his great compassion. Therefore the truth of Dhamma was realised in the wisdom of the Buddha, given to humanity in his teachings. And the great compassion of this ultimate truth (*Dharmakaya)* was realised in the compassionate actions of the Buddha. The Buddha revealed the true-self as the essence of all sentient beings. Everything in the universe is manifest, as the Dhamma, says "who sees me, sees the Dhamma".

Zen says: *"first, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers, then mountains are not mountains and rivers are not rivers"*. However since emptiness empties itself and so cannot itself be an object of attachment, dynamic sunyata empties itself out as just the things themselves. So in the end, *"mountains are again mountains, rivers are again rivers."* The late Tibetan master Kalu Rinpoche said:

"You live in illusion and the appearance of things. There is reality, you are that reality. When you understand this, you will see that you are nothing. And being nothing, you are everything. That is all."

Thus, Sunyata-emptiness is not being as distinguished from beings, nor

is it a transcendent God distinguished from this world, nor is it a nothingness distinguished from the somethingness of ordinary life. It is not to be found outside oneself, nor is it to be found inside oneself. If it were any of these things, or if it were found in any particular place, it would be a relative emptiness. The Truth is a condition of the mind, it is not merely an agreement of religious statements. Even the most profound statements of particular religions are valueless if they do not invoke experiential response. No religion can claim to be in sole possession of the Truth, nor can it claim all human beings are capable of experiencing their claims.

May All Beings Be Happy!

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Notes:

1. Kenosis *lit.* 'emptying': the self limitation of the Logos in Incarnation.
2. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
Who being in the form of God, thought it not Robbery (thing to be grasped after) to be equal with God:
But made himself (emptied himself) of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a man, and was made in the likeness of men.
And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." *(Authorised Version)*

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The Buddhist Critique of Sassatavāda and Ucchedavāda

The Key to a proper Understanding of the Origin and Doctrines of early Buddhism

Y Karunadasa

The early Buddhist discourses often refer to the mutual opposition between two views. One is the view of permanence or eternalism (*sassatavāda*). The other is the view of annihilation (*ucchedavāda*). The former is sometimes referred to as *bhava-diṭṭhi*, the belief in being, and the latter as *vibhava-diṭṭhi*, the belief in non-being. The world at large has a general tendency to lean upon one of these two views. Thus, addressing Kaccāyana, the Buddha says: 'This world, O Kaccāyana, generally proceeds on a duality, of (the belief in) existence and (the belief in) non-existence.'[1] What interests us here is the fact that it is against these two views that Buddhist polemics are continually directed. What is more, all the fundamental doctrines of early Buddhism are presented in such a way as to unfold themselves, or to follow as a logical sequence, from a sustained criticism of *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*. This particular context is sometimes explicitly stated; at other times it is taken for granted. Therefore, it is within the framework of the Buddhist critique of *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* that the Buddhist doctrines seem to assume their significance. For it is through the demolition of these two world-views that Buddhism seeks to construct its own world-view. The conclusion is that it was as a critical response to the mutual opposition between these two views that Buddhism emerged as a new faith amidst many other faiths.

This should become clear if we examine briefly the religious and intellectual milieu in which Buddhism originated. In fact, the prevailing mood of the time is very well reflected in the early Buddhist discourses themselves. The first sutta of the first *nikāya* (section or 'basket') in the *tipiṭaka* (the 'Three Baskets' of the Buddhist canon) begins with an enumeration, and a refutation from the Buddhist point of view, of 62 other views. This and many other suttas in the first four *nikāyas* show that there prevailed a wide variety of mutually exclusive speculations on the nature and destiny of man and his place in the cosmos. Despite their wide variety, we can classify them into three main groups. The first includes all the religions current at the time; the second comprises materialist theories which arose in direct opposition to religion; and the third consists of all forms of scepticism which arose as a reaction against both.

Among the many religions of the day, some were a linear development of Vedic thought while others seem to have emerged either in isolation from or

[1] *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II (Pali Text Society)(=PTS), 17.

in opposition to it. In the former, the trend was more towards theism, monism and orthodoxy; in the latter, it was more towards non-theism, pluralism and heterodoxy. Between the two groups there were a variety of religious teachings which were based on epistemological grounds such as scriptural authority (*piṭaka-sampadā*), revelation (*anussava*), the omniscience of the teacher (*sabbaññutā*), knowledge gained through extrasensory perception and arguments based on pure reasoning (*takka-vīmamsa*).[2] Although they represented a wide spectrum of religious views and practices, they all appear to have subscribed to a belief in a soul or self-entity. This common belief, though it had many variations, is represented in the early Buddhist discourses as a general statement: *aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ*[3] (the *jīva* or soul is one thing and the *sarīra* or body is another). This distinction seems to emphasize the fact that while the soul is something permanent, the body is something perishable. This distinction is also one between the physical body and the metaphysical self. There seems to have been general agreement among all religions that, since this self-entity is something immutable, it survives death and that it is in this self-entity (soul) that man's true essence is to be found. This religious or spiritual view of the human personality is the theory of the metaphysical self. It was this belief in a permanent spiritual substance within man that came to be represented in the Pali suttas as *sassatavāda*.[4] Accordingly, from the Buddhist point of view, all the religions of the day which subscribed to an eternal self-subsisting spiritual entity were but different kinds of *sassatavāda*.

The materialist tradition which emerged in direct opposition to religion also seems to have had more than one school of thought. These took their stand on the epistemological ground that sense-perception was the only valid means of knowledge. Hence they questioned the validity of theological and metaphysical theories which do not come within the ambit of sense-experience.[5] This explains why they rejected the religious version of *ātmavāda*, the belief in a metaphysical self, and gave it a new interpretation. This new interpretation is expressed in the Pali suttas by the words *tam jīvam tam sarīram*[6] (the self is the same as the body). This is quite in contrast to the religious view which emphasizes their duality rather than their identity. The line of argument which seems to have led to this conclusion may be stated as follows: there is no observable self-entity apart

[2] Cf. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I (PTS), 520; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II, 115; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, IV, 138; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I (PTS), 26; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, II, 396, 430. For a detailed discussion, see K N Jayatilake, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1963), ch. IV and V.

[3] *Dīgha Nikāya*, I (PTS), 157, 188; *Dīgha Nikāya*, II, 333, 336; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, IV, 392ff.; *Majjhima Nikāya*, I, 157, 426ff; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, V, 31, 186, 193.

[4] See, for example, *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 13; *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 108; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II, 20; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, III, 99, 182.

[5] See Jayatilake, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, ch. II.

[6] See n.3.

from the body, and since only the observable exists, this self-entity must be identical with the physical body. Therefore, for materialism the soul is a product of the four primary elements of matter (*ayam attā rūpī cātummahābhūtiko*).[7] This materialist view of the human personality is the theory of the physical self. Because materialism identifies the self with the physical body, it necessarily follows that at death, with the break-up of the body, the self too is annihilated (*ucchindati, vinassati*),[8] without any prospect of post-mortal existence. In view of this inevitable conclusion to which the materialist view of life leads, it came to be represented in the Buddhist texts as *ucchedavāda* (annihilationism).[9]

There is a general belief among some modern scholars that materialism (*ucchedavāda*) rejects *in toto* what is called *ātmavāda* or the belief in a soul or self-entity. Generally speaking this may be true, but from the Buddhist point of view it is not valid. According to the Buddhist understanding of *ātmavāda*, any kind of thing, whether it is material, mental or spiritual, could become an *ātman* if it becomes an object of self-identification. This process of self-identification is said to manifest itself in three ways: this is mine (*etam mamā*); this I am (*esoham asmi*); and this is my self (*eso me attā*).[10] As materialism takes the body to be the self, to be an object of self-identification, it is also a variety of *ātmavāda*. One objection that may be raised here is that what materialists identify as the self is not a metaphysical entity but the perishable physical body. In the context of Buddhist teachings, however, what matters is not the permanence or impermanence of the object of self-identification but the very fact of self-identification. Thus Buddhists view both *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* as two varieties of *ātmavāda*.

Because *sassatavāda* emphasizes the duality between the soul and the body, its theory of man's emancipation is based on this notion of duality. Between the soul and the body, it is the soul that is in bondage. Hence if anything is to be saved, it must be the soul. What prevents its upward journey is the gravitational pull of the body, that is gratification in sensuality. Thus deliverance of the soul, its perpetuation in a state of eternal bliss, requires the mortification of the flesh. This is what came to be represented in the Buddhist texts as *attakilamathānuyoga* (self-mortification).[11] It is very likely that it was this belief that led to a variety of ascetic practices during the time of the Buddha. A case in point was Jainism, which advocated rigid austerities to liberate the soul.

[7] *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 34, 55.

[8] Ibid.

[9] *Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 34, 55; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II, 18; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, IV, 401; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, IV, 174, 182ff.

[10] See Khandha Saṃyutta in *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.

[11] See, for example, *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 113; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, IV, 330; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, V, 421; *Majjhima Nikāya*, III, 230.

For *ucchedavāda* (materialism), on the other hand, man 'is a pure product of the earth' awaiting annihilation at death. His aim in this temporary life thus cannot be the rejection of sense-pleasures in the pursuit of a higher spiritual ideal. If anything, it should be just the opposite. This is what came to be described in the Buddhist texts as *kāmasukhallikānuyoga* (sensual gratification).[12] Hence self mortification and sensual gratification represent the practical aspects of the two theories of *sasssatavāda* and *ucchedavāda.*

It is very likely that it was this polarization of intellectual thought into *sasssatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*, with a number of sects and subsects within each tradition, that paved the way for the emergence of scepticism. It is of course true that, as K N Jayatilake observes,[13] there had been sceptical hints and agnostic trends even in pre-Buddhistic Indian thought. However, as he further observes, the actual 'impetus and the occasion for their arising seem to have been provided by the presence of diverse, conflicting and irreconcilable theories pertaining to moral, metaphysical and religious beliefs'.[14] In the Indian context, however, scepticism does not necessarily mean complete dissociation from any ideal of salvation. For there is evidence to suggest that some adopted scepticism on the grounds that knowledge was not only impossible but also a danger to moral development and salvation.[15]

The polarization of religious and intellectual thought into *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* paved the way for the birth of scepticism, and it seems very likely that this very same circumstance led to the emergence of Buddhism as well. This conclusion is, in fact, very much suggested by the Buddha's first sermon, the Sermon on the Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dhamma (the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta).[16] It is against the background of *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* that the Buddha sets out in it his newly discovered path to emancipation, the Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya-aṭṭhangikamagga*). The Buddha himself calls it *majjhimā paṭipadā* (the Middle Path) because it avoids the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification. The avoidance of these two extremes also means the avoidance of the two theories which serve as their background, namely *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*, in other words the physical and the metaphysical theories of the nature of the human personality. Thus the use of the two words Middle Path brings into focus the religious and intellectual background against which Buddhism originated. That the Middle Path is not a compromise between the two extremes or an admixture of them is indicated by its definition in the same sermon as *ubho ante anupagamma*

[12] *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 113; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, IV, 330; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, V, 421; *Vinaya*, I (PTS), 10.
[13] See Jayatilake, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, p. 110
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., pp. 120ff.
[16] *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, V, 420ff.

(without entering into either extreme). This shows that it is called the Middle Path because it transcends the mutual opposition between the two extremes.

In point of fact, the Buddha's life itself delineates the perennial conflict between *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* and its transcendence by the Middle Path. The Buddha's lay life as a prince exemplifies one extreme; his life as an ascetic practising severe austerities exemplifies the other. And his attainment of enlightenment by giving up both extremes shows the efficacy of the Middle Path for deliverance from all suffering.

The Buddhist critique of views, it may be noted here, is not confined to arguments based on logic, epistemology and ontology. It also takes into consideration their psychological motivation, that is the mental dispositions which serve as their causative factors. The theory behind this is that our desires and expectations have an impact on what we tend to believe in. According to the Buddhist diagnosis of the 'psychology' of *sassatavāda* (=*bhava-diṭṭhi*) and *ucchedavāda* (=*vibhava-diṭṭhi*), the former is due to craving for being (*bhava-tanhā*), the desire to perpetuate individuality, and the latter is due to craving for non-being (*vibhava-tanhā*), the desire to be completely annihilated at death.[17] From the Buddhist point of view the reasoning for this may be conjectured as follows: because *ucchedavāda* rejects survival, it tends to encourage man to lead a life without being burdened by a sense of moral responsibility or tormented by moral inhibitions. Therefore it abhors any prospect of after-death existence, as it implies the possibility of moral retribution. It is this psychological resistance on the part of the one who believes in *ucchedavāda* that leads to the desire for annihilation at death. Thus, the mutual conflict between *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* represents not only the perennial conflict between the spiritual and the materialist theories of existence but also the human mind's oscillation between two deep-seated desires.

From what we have observed so far, two things should be clear. The first is that *sassatavāda* is the Buddhist term for all religions other than Buddhism which were current at the time of the Buddha. The second is that *ucchedavāda* is the Buddhist term for all forms of materialism which reject all religions, including Buddhism. Thus the Buddhist critique of *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* identifies Buddhism's position in relation to other world-views which were contemporaneous with it.

It must also be mentioned here that, although Buddhism rejects both *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*, it does so after making a critical assessment of them. According to this assessment, the Buddha was more sympathetic towards *sassatavāda* and more critical of *ucchedavāda*. This too is clear from the Buddha's first sermon, where he refers to the two extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification. Three of the terms used here in

[17] *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 212, 216; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, V, 432, *Vinaya*, I, 10.

criticizing the former, which represents *ucchedavāda,* are *hīna* (inferior), *gamma* (rustic or vulgar) and *pothujjanika* (worldly). However, these three terms are conspicuously absent in the Buddha's assessment of self-mortification, which represents *sassatavāda.*[18] The implication seems to be that although *sassatavāda* does not lead to the realization of the ideal of emancipation (*anattha-saṃhita*),[19] nevertheless it does not lead to the collapse of the moral life. It is not subversive of the moral foundation of human society. As it recognizes a spiritual source in man, it also recognizes moral distinctions. In point of fact, according to Buddhism's assessment, all religions are different forms of *kammavāda,*[20] because they all advocate the supremacy of the moral life. On the other hand, *ucchedavāda,* which represents the materialist theory, encourages a pattern of life which takes gratification in sensuality as the ultimate purpose in life. It takes for granted that man's present existence is entirely due to fortuitous circumstances and thus that he is not morally responsible for what he does during his temporary sojourn in this world.

We observed earlier that it was on the basis of the Noble Eightfold Path that Buddhism transcends the mutual opposition between sensual indulgence and self-mortification. On what basis, then, does Buddhism transcend the mutual opposition between *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*? The answer is provided by the Kaccāyanagotta Sutta of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, where the Buddha addresses Kaccāyana thus:

> This world, O Kaccāyana, generally proceeds on a duality, of (the view of) existence and (the view of) non-existence. But he who with right insight sees the uprising of the world as it really is does not hold with the non-existence of the world. But he who with right insight sees the passing away of the world as it really is does not hold with the existence of the world. Everything exists – this is one extreme. Nothing exists – this is another extreme. Not approaching either extreme the Tathāgata (the Buddha) teaches you a doctrine by the middle (*Tathāgato majjhena dhammaṃ deseti*).[21]

That the words 'a doctrine by the middle' are a reference to the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is clear not only from the context but also from what follows it. For immediately after this the Buddha refers to it specifically, implying thereby that it is through this particular doctrine that Buddhism avoids both *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda.* It will thus be seen that just as the Noble Eightfold Path is called the Middle Path, because it avoids the two extremes of sensual gratification and self-mortification, the doctrine of dependent origination is called the doctrine by the middle (*majjhima-dhamma*), because it avoids in the self-same manner their theoretical background.

[18] *Saṃyutta Nikāya,* V, 420ff.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Cf. Nidāna Vagga in *Saṃyutta Nikāya,* II.
[21] *Saṃyutta Nikāya,* II, 17.

The central position assigned to this particular doctrine is seen by the Buddha's statement that one who discerns dependent origination discerns the Dhamma (*Yo paṭiccasamuppādam passati so dhammam passati*).[22] This statement has often been understood as a reference to the well-known twelve-linked causal formula. However, it is very likely that the reference here is to the causal principle, that is the very fact of dependent origination, and not to its application. The causal principle, as stated in the Pali suttas, is as follows: whenever A is present, B is present (*imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti*); whenever A is absent, B is absent (*imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti*). Therefore, 'from the arising of A, B arises (*imass'uppādā idam uppajjati*); from the cessation of A, B ceases (*imassa nirodhā idam nirujjhati*).[23] This principle should be distinguished from its application, as it has many applications. In fact, it is on the basis of this principle that Buddhism seeks to explain all its fundamental doctrines, such as the analysis of mind and the theory of perception, karma and the moral order and the nature of the empirical individuality and its samsaric dimension. This explains why, as the above quotation shows, an insight into the principle of dependent origination is said to constitute an insight into the very heart of the Dhamma. Stated otherwise, this means that it is the foundation of the Buddhist world-view, and it is through this doctrine that Buddhism transcends the other two world-views represented by *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda.*

If Buddhism avoids *sassatavāda,* this means that there is no self-entity within man which is impervious to change. This may also be interpreted as the denial of any kind of spiritual substance within man which relates him to some kind of transcendental reality serving as the ultimate ground of existence. If Buddhism avoids *ucchedavāda,* this means that the human personality is not a pure product of matter but is an uninterrupted and interconnected process of psycho-physical phenomena which does not terminate at death. Although Buddhism does not agree completely with *sassatavāda,* it does not deny survival (*punabbhava*) and moral responsibility (*kammavāda*).

This ends our survey of the Buddhist critique of *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* when these two terms refer to two mutually exclusive theories of the nature of the human personality. There is, however, another important context or sense in which these two terms are understood: Buddhism considers itself as a critical response to their mutual opposition. This other sense of the two terms becomes clear from a number of passages in the Saṃyutta Nikāya.

[22] *Majjhima Nikāya,* I, 190.
[23] *Majjhima Nikāya,* I, 264; *Udāna* (PTS), 2; *Saṃyutta Nikāya,* II, 70.

In one passage a wandering ascetic named Timbaruka asks the Buddha whether man's experience of pain and pleasure is self-caused (*sayaṃkata*), caused by another (*paraṃkata*), both self-caused and caused by another (*sayaṃkata ca paraṃkatam ca*) or neither self-caused nor caused by another but caused by chance (*asayaṃkāram aparaṃkāram adhiccasamuppannaṃ*). The Buddha gives a negative answer to all four explanations and explains his position on this matter as follows:

> One and the same person both acts and experiences (the result); this Timbaruka, which you call self-caused pain and pleasure, amounts to the theory of *sassata* (the eternalist view). One acts and another experiences (the result); this, Timbaruka, which you called pain and pleasure caused by another, amounts to the theory of *uccheda* (the annihilationist view). To you, Timbaruka, the Tathāgata, not approaching either extreme, teaches the Dhamma by a middle way.[24]

What follows, then, is the Buddhist doctrine of dependent origination.

The two causal theories referred to here are the theory of self-causation (*sayaṃkata*) and the theory of external causation (*paraṃkata*). Let us consider why the former is said to lead to *sassatavāda*. Because *sassatavāda* assumes a permanent basis as a self-subsisting entity, it follows that, according to its theory of causation, there is an essential identity between the cause and the effect. Between the antecedent cause and the subsequent effect, there is unity and oneness. As the pre-Buddhist origin of this causal theory and its further elaboration in the Sāmkhya as *satkāryavāda* has been examined by a number of scholars, we need not elaborate it here. It is sufficient to note that, because *sassatavāda* assumes a permanent, substantial self-entity, an essentially identical self not only acts but also reaps the fruit of the act. That this theory seeks to establish moral responsibility must be readily admitted. In fact, the Buddha himself, as can be gathered from his answer to Timbaruka, does not reject it on moral grounds. The criticism of the theory is based on the fact that it assumes a permanent self-entity which both acts and experiences its result.

What is external causation and why is it said to lead to *ucchedavāda* or annihilation? The use, in the quoted passage above, of the words 'one acts and another experiences' (*anno karoti anno patisamvedeti*) implies a principle which is external to man as the cause of his pain and pleasure. D J Kalupahana, in his *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, lists four such external principles: Issara (the creator god), *niyati* (destiny), *kāla* (time) and *svabhāva* (inherent nature). These theories have been critically analyzed in the work cited,[25] so let us confine ourselves to the question why they are said to lead to *ucchedavāda*. That the term *ucchedavāda*, as used in

[24] *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II, 21ff.

[25] D J Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Honolulu, 1975), pp. 6ff.

this particular context, does not mean materialism is obvious. The very fact that the theory of divine creation (*issaranimmānavāda*) is cited as an instance of external causation also points to this conclusion. The reason, as Kalupahana has shown, is that here the term *ucchedavāda* is understood not in its usual sense as materialism but as annihilation of action, that is the elimination of the connection between an action and its consequences.[26] In other words, annihilation here means the annihilation of moral responsibility. The reason for this is that the theory of external causation posits a principle which is external to man as the cause of his experience of both pain and pleasure. This results in a situation where one who commits an act and one who experiences its result are not the same. It obliterates the causal connection between the person who acts and the person who experiences. Thus it inevitably leads to what Buddhism calls *akiriyavāda*, the theory that fails to establish the efficacy of moral acts.[27]

In the passage from the Saṃyutta Nikāya to which we referred above, there are two other questions raised by Timbaruka. One is whether man's experience of pain and pleasure is both self-caused and caused by another. The other is whether it is neither self-caused nor caused by another but is due to circumstances caused by chance. The first is based on a combination of both self-causation and external causation, the second on the denial of both. The Buddha's answer to these two questions is not given in the sutta passage under consideration. The implication seems to be that the answer to the first two questions provides the answer to the second two as well.

Let us take first the theory that combines both self-causation and external causation. As Buddhism denies the validity of each, it follows that a combination of both is also not valid. This theory seems to represent the doctrine of karma as explained in Jainism, which in Buddhist texts is represented as *sabbaṃ pubbekatahetu*, that is everything is due to past karma. What it amounts to is that, although the individual is responsible for his acts, once he has committed an act, it completely determines his future and thus becomes external to him. In this sense it could be understood as a combination of both self-causation and external causation.[28] The next theory agrees with Buddhism in denying both self-causation and external causation. However, it disagrees when it seeks to explain man's experience of pain and pleasure as entirely due to fortuitous circumstances (*adhicca-samuppanna*). The Buddhist explanation is that it is due to dependent origination.[29]

From the Buddhist point of view, these two theories lead, as does that of external causation, to *akiriyavāda*, the denial of the efficacy of moral acts. This is seen from the Buddhist critique of what are called the three *titthāyatanas* or the grounds of sectarian tenets. These are: everything is due

[26] Ibid.

[27] *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 173; *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, IV, 174; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, III, 73.

[28] Kalupahana, *Causality*, pp. 44ff.

[29] See Nidāna Vagga in *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.

to past karma (*sabbaṃ pubbekata-hetu*); everything is due to creation by a supreme deity (*sabbaṃ issaranimmāna-hetu*); and nothing is due to causes and conditions (*sabbaṃ ahetu-appaccayā*).[30] These three are respectively the theory of karmic determinism, the theory of divine creation and the theory of fortuitous origination. What is interesting to notice here is that they are all criticized in identical terms. If everything is due to past karma, to a supreme deity or to no assignable cause or condition, then, so runs the argument, all evil among men should be traceable to one of these three principles, with the added implication that men are not responsible for their own evil acts. The moral argument against these views concludes: for those who fall back on these views, 'there is neither desire to do, nor effort to do, nor necessity to do this deed or abstain from that deed. So then, the necessity for action or inaction not being found to exist, in truth and verity, the term "recluse" cannot reasonably be applied to them, since they live in a state of bewilderment with faculties unwarded.'[31]

It is also observed that if, as the Jainas maintain, what one experiences is completely determined by past karma, then the Jainas who deliberately undergo severe forms of suffering by practising austerities would have behaved evilly in the past, whereas the Buddha, who now experiences extreme forms of happiness, would have behaved well in the past.[32] A similar observation is made about theistic determinism: if beings experience pleasure and pain because of creation by a supreme deity, then the Niganthas (=Jainas) must have been created by an evil deity because they experience extreme forms of pain, and the Buddha, because he is freed from defilements and enjoys extreme happiness, must have been created by a benevolent deity.[33]

From what we have observed so far, it should be clear that Buddhism dissociates itself from four contemporaneous doctrines which seek to explain man's experience of pain and pleasure. The first doctrine, to reiterate, is based on self-causation, the second on external causation, the third on an assertion of both, and the fourth on a negation of both. According to the Buddhist assessment, the first leads to *sassatavāda* and the other three to *ucchedavāda*. Here *sassatavāda* means a theory that upholds moral responsibility by asserting that the one who commits an act and the one who experiences its effect are one and the same self-entity (*so karoti so patisamvedeti*). If Buddhism rejects it, it is not on moral grounds but on the ground that it assumes a self-subsisting entity, which goes against the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā*. On the other hand, in this particular context *ucchedavāda* means a doctrine that leads to *akiriyavāda*, that is the annihilation of the efficacy of moral acts. If Buddhism rejects it, it is not

[30] *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 174.
[31] *Gradual Sayings* I (PTS), 157 (*Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 174).
[32] *Majjhima Nikāya*, II, 222, 227.
[33] Ibid.

only on moral grounds but also on the ground that it too misrepresents the nature of reality as conceived by Buddhism.

It will thus be seen that the distinction between *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* rests on two different senses. According to the first, they represent two mutually exclusive views of the nature of the human personality, the physical and the metaphysical theories of the self. According to the second, they assume significance in the context of moral causation. It will also be seen that their distinction in one sense could overlap with their distinction in the other sense. Thus Jainism, which believes in a permanent soul, and Issaranimmānavāda, which believes in a supreme deity who creates the world, are two examples of *sassatavāda* in one sense. On the other hand, in the context of moral causation both come under *ucchedavāda*, as they are said to lead to *akiriyavāda*.[34]

It is as a critical response to *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda* in relation to the two theories of the physical and the metaphysical self that Buddhism establishes its doctrine of *anattā*. And it is as a critical response to *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*, when these two terms are used in the context of the causality of the moral order, that Buddhism establishes its doctrine of moral causation. If Buddhism transcends the mutual opposition between *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*, in whichever sense they are understood, it does so on the basis of its doctrine of dependent origination. This explains why it is identified with the Dhamma itself: 'He who discerns dependent origination, discerns the Dhamma; he who discerns the Dhamma, discerns dependent origination.' The very fact that it is also described as the 'doctrine by the middle' brings into focus how as a new faith Buddhism responded to the religious and intellectual milieu in which it originated.

* * *

Better to understand for a single day
the fleeting nature of things than to
live for a hundred years without
such understanding.

Dhammapada 113

[34] See *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 174.

Kindness and Compassion as Means to Nirvana

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37/4

(1)

KINDNESS AND COMPASSION AS MEANS TO NIRVANA IN EARLY BUDDHISM*

(1)

The best lectures have the quality of detective stories. The lecturer holds her audience's attention (my use of the feminine pronoun alludes of course to the initiator of this series, Wendy Doniger) by relaying to them all sorts of colourful and intriguing facts, preferably interlarded with jokes, and while they are laughing and gasping they wonder where all this is leading, until in the last few minutes the lecturer, like a conjuror, produces the rabbit from his top hat in the shape of an unexpected but telling conclusion, a new and convincing way of interpreting his topic. As my friend Lee Siegel has wisely said, 'I try to say something both true and interesting, but if I can't manage that, I'll settle for one of them.'

Even were I capable of presenting such a tour de force, the circumstances of this lecture would have prevented it. The efficient organisers asked more than a year ago not only for the title of my lecture, but for a short resumé of my subject to accompany its announcement. So the rabbit is not only out of the hat but has been lying exposed to your inspection like game on a butcher's slab: the rules of this game preclude surprise.

In this situation I have tried to keep interest alive and to tickle the jaded palates of the many connoisseurs of Indology here today by making a bold claim. As my title and resumé announce, I wish to argue that the conventional view of the Buddha's message and his place in the history of world religion is wrong: that far from preaching that the only solution to life's problems lay in eliminating emotion, he was the person who found a way to salvation *through* emotion, albeit emotion purified of selfishness; that the common accusation that early Buddhism is inherently selfish could hardly be wider of the mark; and that it was the Buddha who introduced love and compassion into Indian religion. This claim is at least interesting, so I have met Lee Siegel's minimum requirement. But is it also true?

My conclusion – I would even say discovery – that the Buddha considered the cultivation of kindness and compassion to be a way (though, please note, not

* Pali texts are cited in the editions published by the Pali Text Society.

the *only* way) to reach salvation, nirvana, is mentioned, though not given great prominence, in a book I published late last year called *How Buddhism Began*.[1] Predictably, it has already been criticised[2] by the voice of orthodoxy (in this case that of the learned and admirable Bhikkhu Bodhi), repeating the arguments which have obscured my discovery from the world for so many centuries. My position is quite simple, and it will not take very long to tell you of the texts and the reasoning on which I base my view. It has however become clear to me that what needs to be done at some length, even if it is not so much fun, is to justify my approach and explain how I can dare to reach so radical a conclusion and defy established wisdom.

The first thing I have to justify is the mere fact of defying received opinion. Can an outsider tell people about their religion? In academic circles, especially in North America, this has become a suspect activity. The motives for this suspicion are not unworthy. Until recent times our western universities and academies were generally dominated by the locally prevalent form of Christian orthodoxy; the study of religion meant Christian theology; and if other religions were mentioned at all, it was generally to be castigated for their errors. Adherents of non-Christian religions were not invited to present their views, and what is called comparative religion, a subject only about a century old, was frequently vitiated (as still sometimes happens even today) by asking inappropriate questions of other religions, questions based on category mistakes and other misunderstandings. In the United States, a multi-cultural society with an egalitarian ideology, the view has gained ground that people should be allowed to describe their own beliefs and values rather than have those beliefs and values ascribed to them.

This very proper view has however led to some muddled thinking. The ideas and practices of living informants are generally the subject matter of the social sciences, which are far more popular and widely practised in the United States than history or philology. But the history of a faith community or the interpretation of their sacred texts can legitimately raise two quite different kinds of questions. We can ask what their history or their texts *mean to them*, and use their responses as our data – though it is often too readily assumed that those responses will be uniform, that the informants we happen to ask can stand for

[1] *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*, London 1996.

[2] Review in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 4, 1997, pp. 292–6.

the entire group. But historians and textual scholars, once they are equipped with the tools of their trade, such as the knowledge of languages, can legitimately ask quite different questions: what did historical events *mean to the original participants*; what did texts mean to those who composed them, or to their earliest audiences? To such questions we are under no obligation to accept the answers of those who stand in the relevant tradition, even though we must be ready to learn from them, as indeed from anyone at all who has anything relevant to tell us.

Besides the widespread ethical distaste for privileging the opinions of what Americans call Caucasian males, intellectual fashion within the narrower circles of religious studies has swung against what is sometimes called 'the search for origins'. This is a reaction to the theological preoccupation, which began in the middle of the 19th century, with trying to sweep away later accretions to Christianity and search for the 'historical Jesus'. After a while it was observed that for both theoretical and practical reasons this had gone too far: subjects of more immediate relevance, such as what brought people into church, were not receiving sufficient attention. On the other hand, until about the 1950s the few scholars who studied non-Christian religions tended to be more comfortable at their desks with their dictionaries of classical languages than in following religious traditions through the centuries down to modern times – after all, one had to start somewhere. My own academic career began in this reactive mood. I was interested in Theravada Buddhism, and in 1959 began to learn Pali and read secondary sources, but the available material gave me little feeling for what living Theravada Buddhists were like, so I made it my doctoral project to go to Sri Lanka and find out. I was lucky in my timing. The anthropology of Buddhism (especially Theravada Buddhism) was just taking off, and within a few years Gananath Obeyesekere, Melford Spiro and Stanley Tambiah were publishing their great monographs in the field. Thus my first book, *Precept and Practice*,[3] was praised for innovating in what later came to be regarded as a politically correct manner. I was doing the right sort of thing.

But I am restless, if not downright perverse. In the eighties I found that now everyone was doing the right sort of thing, so perhaps it was time to go back to old-fashioned philology, and try to join what seemed to me to be a valuable

[3] First edition Oxford 1971. Revised edition published as *Buddhist Precept and Practice*, Delhi 1991.

tradition. Perhaps I might even say 'rejoin', as my initial training was in Latin and Greek. The main defect of this tradition, at least as it has been practised in Britain, seems to me to be its naive positivism. Scholars became virtuosi at emending texts on the basis of their understanding of the author's way of writing, be it grammar, metrics, style or meaning, and they have been meticulous in the collection, recording and analysis of evidence; but sometimes this very virtuosity may lead them astray so that they forget about the hermeneutic circle (if they have ever heard of it) and appear to be unaware that their very knowledge of the rules of the relevant metre, or whatever else is in focus, is based on no more than probabilities established by generations of scholars and editorial decisions. This belief that at least close adherence to the texts will provide a bedrock of certain knowledge is a fallacy. It may well not vitiate the actual work produced, but it does do harm when it inhibits the scholar from being willing to extrapolate from the evidence, from forming hypotheses, in other words from making informed guesses, which can be debated and thus advance the subject.

In turning to the Pali texts, therefore, my aim has been to cultivate the philologists' fine ear for discrepancies and discordances, as well as their scrupulous regard for evidence, while venturing at the same time to put forward ideas which do not have the authority of the established tradition. The tradition and I have the same corpus of evidence, namely the texts, first and foremost the texts in Pali, the language of the scriptural canon of Theravada Buddhism; but I feel free to reinterpret those texts. In 1989[4] I reinterpreted the evidence in Pali chronicles to argue that the date of the Buddha's death was not 543 B.C., as held in the modern Theravada tradition, or for that matter 483 B.C., a version of that tradition emended by some modern scholars, but about 405 B.C.; and it is worth noting that nobody has yet found a flaw in my argument. In exactly the same way, I think that some of the Pali texts which record the Buddha's sermons have been misinterpreted by tradition, and feel free to say so until my arguments have been refuted.

[4] The article was published in 1992 as 'Dating the Buddha: A Red Herring Revealed', in *The Dating of the Historical Buddha/Die Datierung des historischen Buddha*, Part 2, (*Symposien zur Buddhismusforschung*, IV, 2) ed. Heinz Bechert, Göttingen; pp. 237–259. But in 1989 I sent my article to more than a hundred scholars and began to present my argument in lectures round the world.

The exegesis of the Pali canon has not yet advanced much beyond where the exegesis of the Bible stood in the middle of the 19th century, though the Buddhist sources are less complicated. For our purposes it is sufficient to say that there are two relatively homogeneous bodies of source material: the canonical texts, which purport to record the words of the Buddha, and the commentaries, preserved for us in the same Pali language, on those texts.

Let me deal with the commentaries first. Those on the Buddha's sermons are all ascribed to one man, Buddhaghosa, whom we know to have been active in Sri Lanka at the very beginning of the fifth century A.D.. Buddhaghosa also wrote a huge book, called *The Path to Purity* (*Visuddhi-magga*), which summarises Theravada Buddhist doctrine in so masterly a fashion that it has remained authoritative to this day. Sometimes the other commentaries refer to *The Path to Purity* for amplification on a topic. Even so, I do not myself think that they are all the work of Buddhaghosa; but that need not concern us today. To what extent Buddhaghosa (with possible colleagues) is the author and to what extent he is the editor of the commentaries may never be fully known, but it is beyond dispute that he often explicitly cites older commentaries, mostly written in Sinhala. These have all been lost, but obviously they take us back earlier than the time of Buddhaghosa himself; one scholar who studied them, E. W. Adikaram,[5] thinks that they were closed in the second century A.D.. What the evidence seems to show beyond doubt is that they were not closed earlier than that. According to tradition (embedded in those same commentaries), their substance goes back to the communal rehearsal of the doctrine held just after the Buddha's death, and was brought to Sri Lanka in the middle of the third century B.C. by the group led by Mahinda, the missionaries who introduced Buddhism into the island. Tradition also holds that the texts, including the commentaries, were first written down in Sri Lanka in the first century B.C.. The commentaries were probably recorded in Sinhala.

What emerges from all this is that on the one hand the Theravadin tradition of exegesis claims that it stretches right back from the texts we now have to the time of the Buddha himself, a period of about eight hundred years, and I see no reason to consider this implausible. But this is entirely different from positing that over those eight centuries, while the commentaries were transmitted orally

[5] *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo 1946.

(and there is no reason to think that during oral transmission they had the fixity imparted by writing), were translated and edited, nothing of importance was added, lost or otherwise changed. For that there would surely be no parallel recorded in human history. Nor was there any cultural scruple to inhibit changing the commentaries, for they do not even have the sanctity of being ascribed to the Buddha himself.

What of the texts which are so ascribed? The ones that concern us are the sermons of the Buddha, who lived, I think one can now agree, in the fifth century B.C.. The first firm evidence for the use of writing in India dates from the middle of the third century B.C..[6] The texts that record the Buddha's sermons are for the most part narrations in which the Buddha plays the leading role, though in some cases the sermon is ascribed to a leading monk. The tradition holds that the texts of the sermons were formulated at the council held soon after the Buddha's death. They were formulated by Ānanda, the monk who had been the Buddha's personal attendant during the latter half of his forty-five-year preaching career. When Ānanda had formulated the texts, they were rehearsed by all the monks attending the council, thus beginning the tradition of oral preservation of the teachings.

Each Buddhist tradition preserves its own version of exactly what happened at this first council and there is little agreement on the details. However, all do agree that there was an event of this kind, and I do not see how any coherent body of literature could have come into being without some such event. Again, however – and on this point all modern scholars agree – there are certainly texts in the Pali canon which do not go back to the first council. Few of the texts which are so certainly late are among the sermons; but there are even a few sermons which mention people whom we know to have lived after the Buddha.

The body of sermons preserved in Pali is very large: the Buddhists themselves count them as 17,505,[7] a greater number than appears to have come down to us. Most of them are short, and the corpus is full of repetitions and redundancies. Even so, it is a massive body of (mainly) prose literature. Either at the outset or very early on, the body of sermons was divided into four collections and

[6] Harry Falk, *Schrift in alten Indien: ein Forschungsbericht mit Anmerkungen*, Tübingen 1993.
[7] *Sumaṅgala-Vilāsinī* 1, 22–23.

monks and nuns specialised in learning by heart one of the collections (or an other part of the canon) in order to preserve it.

The majority of the sermons, though by no means all, are preserved in translations made from Indian languages into Chinese, mostly around the time of Buddhaghosa, eight centuries after the Buddha. The Indian originals of these translations had been separately preserved by other Buddhist traditions or 'schools'. The systematic comparison of these Chinese versions with the Pali versions is still in its infancy; but overall it is clear that despite many discrepancies the degree of agreement is impressive, indeed astonishing.

The corpus of the Buddha's sermons is rich and varied, and it is not always prima facie obvious that he is everywhere saying the same thing. Since he preached for forty-five years and was evidently a man of supreme intelligence and originality, it would indeed be astonishing, unparalleled, and to my mind disappointing if over that span he had done nothing but repeat himself, or indeed had never changed his mind. Needless to say, however, his followers were not all of such high calibre. Despite the Buddha's explicit disclaimer, they ascribed to him omniscience from the moment of his Enlightenment, so that a change of mind was not admissible. By the same token, he could not be inconsistent. The Buddha was famous for adapting the expression of his message to his audience – a trait which became known later as his 'skill in means' – and commentators used this fact to explain that apparent discrepancies were due to variations in expression made for homiletic purposes; they were merely metaphorical, or some other form of indirect expression.

What we have in the texts, of course, is not a perfect record of the Buddha's intentions, let alone of his actual words, but records of what various monks (and perhaps nuns) believed him to have said and meant. The collection of sermons cannot possibly be ascribed in its entirety to Ānanda or any other single monk. Many monks figure in the texts themselves as interlocutors with the Buddha and with each other, and the texts must in most cases reflect their testimony. These monks and their successors were not merely of diverse character and intelligence; they had been converted as adults from other beliefs and practices, backgrounds which must have coloured their understanding. It is hard for me to conceive how in this great mass of texts we should not hear, even if muted, various voices giving their own opinions of what the Buddha had meant to say. But of course we can fail to hear them if we are determined to be deaf.

As has happened in every learned religious tradition, the exegetes homogenised and systematised the founder's message. The brahminical exegetical tradition made explicit the principle that revealed texts, *śruti*, had only one purport; this was called *eka-vākyatā*. No such principle was explicitly formulated in Buddhism, but one cannot too often stress that in ancient India the brahmin culture was hegemonic and deeply influenced all other traditions – anthropologists, observing this in modern times, have dubbed it 'sanskritization'.[8] I contend that in more ways than have yet been explicated, Buddhism was sanskritized over the centuries of its development in India, and this commentarial homogenisation could be seen as an instance of that process.

This homogenisation is the first of three defects which I find in the Pali exegetical tradition. The second is excessive literalism, a failing that the Buddha himself foresaw and warned against. Once the texts had been formulated, their words were carefully preserved and a technical significance was often ascribed to some quite normal and innocent expression; I have provided several examples of this in my recent book.

The third deficiency in the commentaries, from our point of view, is that they have largely lost the memory of the Buddha's historical context. I have been at pains to show that important aspects of the Buddha's message are formulated in terms set by the early brahminical scriptures, especially the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, both where he agrees and where he disagrees with the brahmins, and that we lose a whole dimension of his meaning if we are unaware of this context and argument.

All these three shortcomings in the traditional Buddhist interpretation of the Buddha's sermons – homogenisation, literalism, and ignorance of the Upaniṣadic background – are relevant to my argument in this lecture. Moreover, at least the first two of them are to be found within the canonical corpus itself. It is not merely legitimate but necessary for the student of the Pali canon to employ the same alert eye as any other textual critic in order to spot discrepancies. Of course, one must not be hasty in jumping to conclusions: an obscurity or difficulty is not necessarily a discrepancy. One must never forget the editorial principle of *lectio difficilior potior*: it is the difficult reading which is likely to be the original, the easy one an attempt by the tradition to smooth over the difficulty. But

[8] The term was coined by M. N. Srinivas.

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the sort of discrepancy I have in mind is when a word or expression in a text sounds odd and seems hard to interpret, but then we find it in another text where it fits the context perfectly; one may then hypothesise that the latter context is the original one and the other is secondary, a later creation.

Such a critical approach is no exact science but a matter of judgement; but this is not to admit the charge put by some conservatives, that any stratification of the canonical texts is 'arbitrary'. Where however I do think that the conservatives have a point is that it turns out that one cannot simply label whole texts as early or late. Passages long or short (Biblical scholars call them 'pericopes') move from text to text, as one might expect in an orally preserved tradition, so that if what can be shown to be a relatively early or late passage appears within a large formal unit, a sermon or a chapter, it does not follow that that whole unit can thereby be labelled correspondingly early or late.

In one of the obscurest of my many obscure articles I gave a fine illustration of the hermeneutics I have just enunciated. The article is called 'Three Souls, One or None: the Vagaries of a Pali Pericope',[9] and concerns an expression, a set of phrases nine words long, which occurs in five texts in the Pali Canon. In only one of these does it make perfectly good sense – a text[10] in which a brahmin is criticising Buddhists. Once lifted out of that original context, the expression looks very strange, as it seems to suggest that ascetics can 'blow out' a self whereas the Buddhist position is that one has no such 'self' in the first place. Not only do the commentaries on this expression in its secondary contexts have trouble in explaining it: their explanations are themselves discrepant. This seems to be an undeniable case in which neither the canonical corpus nor the commentarial corpus ascribed to Buddhaghosa can be made to yield homogeneous authorial unity; in other words, people who did not fully understand the expression have used it in the creation of canonical texts, and other people who did not understand it have given more than one interpretation of it in the commentaries.

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[9] *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, vol. 11, 1987, pp. 73–8.
[10] *Aṅguttara Nikāya* 1, 168ff.

I have explained my method; let me now apply it. In the Pali canon[11] there is a poem called the *Metta Sutta*, a title which one could translate 'The text on kindness'. In fact I think that in this and similar contexts the Pali word *sutta* derives from the Sanskrit word *sūkta*, literally 'well spoken', which is a way of referring to a Vedic hymn.[12]

Be that as it may, the Pali text both exemplifies and extols having kind thoughts towards the whole world. It has traditionally been used by Buddhist meditators, and in modern Sri Lanka it has become for Sinhala Buddhist schoolchildren a kind of functional equivalent to the Lord's prayer, because they recite it every day at school, usually (I believe) at the end of the school day just before going home.

The text has been shown to be in a very archaic metre[13] (which the commentators did not identify), and its expression is sometimes rather clumsy. The first half-verse consists of a sentence which the most learned of modern translators, Prof. K. R. Norman, renders into English as follows:[14]

> 'This is what is to be done by one who is skilful in respect of the good, having attained the peaceful state.'

[11] *Sutta-nipāta* 1, 8 = vv. 143–152.

[12] There is an early Upaniṣad called the *Maitri Upaniṣad*, and the Sanskrit word *maitri* is the equivalent of the Pali word *mettā*. The Upaniṣad is not about kindness, but it is possible that the Pali title is an allusion to it.
The form of the title requires some further comment. Firstly, it is commonly known as the *Karaṇiyametta Sutta*. *Karaṇiya* is the first word of the text; it means 'to be done', so that that form of the title means 'the 'kindness should be practised' text'. Secondly, the noun *mett'ā* in Pali is feminine with a long *a*, so why is the final *a* in this title short? I think it comes from the Sanskrit adjective *maitra*, 'friendly'. Within the poem, the word only occurs in verse 8, and here too I think it is adjectival: *mettaṃ mānasaṃ* I take to mean 'friendly thought'.
On this analogy, in the next verse (9) I also see *brahmaṃ* as a *vṛddhi*-ed adjective, from Sanskrit *brāhmya*.

[13] L. Alsdorf, *Die Āryā-strophen des Pali-Kanons*, Mainz 1968.

[14] *The Group of Discourses* vol. II, Oxford 1992, p. 16.

This translation follows the commentary (which in this case is ascribed not to Buddhaghosa but to Dhammapāla). The text then lists a string of virtues, before changing direction with the famous words, 'May all beings be happy and secure.'

'The peaceful state' is, as the commentator rightly tells us, *nibbāna*, the Buddhist's religious goal. But if that is so, why is the person who has attained *nibbāna* being told what he has to do? Surely he has no more duties? Surely, in fact, Buddhist doctrine holds that one who attains this state must already be perfectly moral, to the extent that he is no longer capable of anything wrong in thought, word or deed?

It was in fact, if my memory serves me, Prof. Norman who first pointed out to me the solution to this puzzle. The Pali word which he has translated 'having attained' is an absolutive, a grammatical form which usually has the meaning 'having done' (where 'done' stands for any verb); but in Pali the infinitive, which is most commonly used to express purpose,[15] can be used as an absolutive. So here that same semantic assimilation would be operating in reverse, and the introductory verse is saying what one has to do *in order to attain* nirvana.

Various virtues are then listed. But most of the poem prescribes how one should love all living beings as a mother loves her own child. 'Towards the whole world one should develop loving thoughts, boundless: upwards, downwards, sideways, without restriction, enmity or rivalry. Standing, walking, sitting or lying, one should be as alert as possible and keep one's mind on this. They call this divine living in this world. Not taking up ideas, virtuous, with perfect insight, by controlling greed for sensual pleasure one does not return to lie in a womb.'

This conclusion to the poem surely corroborates that the whole poem is about how one may become enlightened, not how one will behave after so becoming. Moreover, it is natural to interpret 'not returning to lie in a womb' as meaning that one will have escaped altogether from the cycle of rebirth, which is to say that one will have attained nirvana. A scholiast familiar with the full development of Buddhist cosmology could object that there are forms of life, higher than us in the universe, in which rebirth is not via a womb but spontaneous.[16] Thus it is possible to interpret the end of the poem, if it is taken in isolation,

[15] E.g. *datthu*, *Sutta-nipāta* v. 424.

[16] Ordinary gods (*deva*), however, though born spontaneously, are bound at the end of their finite lives to be reborn in a lower state of existence.

as referring only to escape from the grosser forms of rebirth. But there is no such scope for ambiguity in 'the peaceful state', the phrase at the beginning of the poem. So it seems clear that the purport of the whole poem is that kindness is salvific.

The poem does not clearly state that kindness *alone* will produce salvific results. There is a list of other virtues mentioned at the beginning, and the last verse too speaks of other qualities of great importance, notably insight and self-control. I believe I can prove to you in this lecture that that is in fact the purport of the poem; but I certainly cannot from this poem alone disprove the traditional view of kindness as a less than salvific virtue.

What is that traditional view? There is a set of four states of mind which the Buddha highly commends: kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. How the four relate to each other we can learn from Buddhaghosa: one becomes 'like a mother with four sons, namely a child, an invalid, one in the flush of youth, and one busy with his own affairs; for she wants the child to grow up, wants the invalid to get well, wants the one in the flush of youth to enjoy for long the benefits of youth, and is not at all bothered about the one who is busy with his own affairs.'[17] These four states have two names: they are called 'the boundless'[18] and the *brahma-vihāra*. A *vihāra* came to be the word for a Buddhist monastery – hence the name of the Indian state of Bihar. It means 'monastery' because it means 'a place to stay'. The noun derives from a verb which simply means 'to spend time, to stay', and the noun can just mean 'staying'. What about *brahma*? *Brahman* is a name for the religious goal of the brahmins, the monistic principle posited in the Upaniṣads, texts which convey *brahma-vidyā*, 'knowledge of brahman'. As the monistic principle, *brahman* is neuter, but there is also a masculine Brahman, a supreme god, whom we might regard as a personification of the neuter principle, though historically the development may have been the reverse. The Buddhist term *brahma-vihāra* thus carries an inescapable reference to brahminism, for it means 'staying with *brahman*'. Whether one regards that *brahman* as personal or impersonal, masculine or neuter – since the form of the

[17] *Visuddhi-magga* IX, §108, trans. Ñyāṇamoli (*sic*), *The Path of Purification*, 2nd ed., Colombo 1964.

[18] *appamāṇa*. However, in the *Metta Sutta* the (synonymous) word is *aparimāṇa*, perhaps because of the exigency of the metre. See Alsdorf, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

word allows either interpretation – for a brahmin 'staying with *brahman*' is the ultimate goal, the state of salvation.

The Buddha regularly took brahminical terms and gave them a new meaning. The very word 'brahmin', *brāhmaṇa*, he said should not refer to a person born in a particular family but to someone with certain virtues.[19] One famous sermon, the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*,[20] is mainly devoted to teaching a brahmin that a true sacrifice (*yañña*) does not involve killing any animals, but various kinds of moral action. Indeed, the Buddha even took the brahmin term for ritual action, *karman* in Sanskrit, and said that for him *kamma* (the Pali equivalent) was purely a matter of intention, good or bad.

This last example is particularly telling, because it involves making a word mean its virtual opposite, since *karman* derives from the verb meaning 'to do, to act'. Yet there is no canonical text or commentary that spells out how the Buddha is taking a brahminical term and using it to mean the opposite. We simply have the Buddha's statement, 'By *kamma* I mean intention,'[21] and the whole edifice of thought built on that foundation.

The tradition is not unaware that the Buddha was often arguing and competing with brahmins; there is a lot of straightforward evidence for that in the canon. When the Buddha attains Enlightenment but is reluctant to preach, the story goes that Brahma himself comes and begs him to favour the world by telling them about the way which he has discovered.[22] The Buddha himself, however, tended to express his disagreements with Brahminism more subtly, and indeed sometimes more humorously.

The four *brahma-vihāra* occur in several canonical texts, but the *locus classicus* is the *Tevijja Sutta*.[23] Indeed, some of the vocabulary and phraseology of the *Metta Sutta* comes straight out of the *Tevijja Sutta*. In that prose text, the Buddha introduces the four *brahma-vihāra* in a narrative context. Two young brahmins are arguing about the direct way to what they call 'companionship with Brahma', and decide to ask the Buddha. This leads to a long conversation, in which the

[19] E.g. *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta* (*Digha Nikāya sutta* IV); *Sutta-nipāta* v. 136.

[20] *Digha Nikāya sutta* V.

[21] *Aṅguttara Nikāya* III, 415.

[22] *Vinaya* I, 5–7.

[23] *Digha Nikāya sutta* XIII.

Buddha makes fun of brahmins for claiming to teach the way to a goal they have never seen; he compares this, among other things, to declaring one is in love with a beauty queen without having the faintest idea what she looks like, who she is or where she lives. He contrasts the brahmins who claim to know all their sacred texts, the three Vedas, with the picture they draw of Brahma, whom they claim they will join because they resemble him, and says that on the other hand it is a Buddhist monk who resembles Brahma. His account of the monk's way of life culminates in his saying that the monk permeates every direction with his kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Thus it appears plausible that at death such a monk 'goes to companionship with Brahma', he says. Convinced by this, the two young brahmins convert to Buddhism.

The traditional interpretation of this text agrees with what I have said about it so far, but takes a literal view of what is meant by companionship with Brahma. Fully developed Buddhist cosmology holds that above the world in which we human beings are at home there are six heavens inhabited by gods; and above them again are heavens of a more rarefied kind inhabited by Brahmas, who are thus super-gods. Even above these heavens there are planes inhabited only by meditating minds. Most, perhaps all, of this cosmology can be unpacked by the historian as a reification of various metaphors. That Brahma is above ordinary gods is a brahminical tenet found in the Upaniṣads, including the very texts to which we can show that the Buddha was reacting.

The fully developed Buddhist cosmology does appear within the canon, but I am extremely sceptical about whether it can be ascribed to the Buddha himself. I am sceptical not only because of the way that the details can be accounted for as a historical development; to show such interest in the structure of the universe goes against the Buddha's explicit message. The world, he said, lies within this fathom-long human carcass;[14] indeed, there are many texts in which he discourages speculation about or even interest in the physical universe; we should concentrate on our experience of life here and now.

The Buddha says to the two young brahmins that a monk who has boundless kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy or equanimity is, like Brahma, without grasping (*apariggaho* – a word that can also mean 'without possessions') and in full control (*vasavatti* – a word that when applied to a god comes close to meaning

[14] *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 1, 62.

omnipotent, but for a monk refers to self-control), and so at death may well (*ṭhānaṃ etaṃ vijjati*) go to join Brahma. There are three possible ways of interpreting this. First, that of the Theravada tradition, which takes it literally to mean that the monk is reborn in Brahma's company, in other words in one of the Brahma worlds posited by its cosmology. I have shown in my recent book[15] that the canonical texts go into further detail but reach inconsistent conclusions, a fact which must itself arouse suspicion.

The second interpretation, of which we have no actual record, would be that of a brahmin, such as the Buddha's original audience, who took it literally in the sense of their own cosmology, the teaching of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* to which the Buddha is responding. That text says that those who have achieved gnosis, the realisation that in essence they are *brahman*, when they die pass beyond the sun to the lightning, and then are conducted to the worlds of Brahman, where they remain. This itself, of course, is interpreted by the brahminical tradition as a metaphorical expression for merging into *brahman*, but that is not how the *Upaniṣad* puts it.

The third interpretation, mine, is that the Buddha was using the brahminical way of putting things as a metaphor for what he saw as the highest goal, the attainment of final emancipation from the round of rebirth. He was using the brahminical description of their *summum bonum*, which was itself couched in metaphorical terms, to describe his own *summum bonum* in precisely analogous metaphorical style. In doing so he was adapting the style of his message to the understanding of his audience, using that 'skill in means' (*upāya kauśalya*) for which he became so famous.

In all gnostic religions salvation is bound to be a two-stage process: to have the salvific realisation, one has to be alive, and then the ultimate solution comes when life ends. The ideal Upaniṣadic monist understands that he is Brahman, and then becomes Brahman at death; one can neatly express this by bringing out the range of meanings in the English verb 'realise', and saying that he 'realises' his true nature by insight while alive, and makes it real at death. In Buddhism this same dual character of nirvana is expressed by saying that the blowing out of the fires of greed, hatred and delusion while one is still alive leaves a residue of fuel (*sa-upādi-sesa nibbāna*), while the death of such an enlightened person

[15] *How Buddhism Began*, pp. 85–6.

is *nibbāna* with no such residue (*an-upādi-sesa*): there is simply nothing left which could again be ignited with the passions.

So far I have discussed what the *Tevijja Sutta* has to say about this second, final stage of liberation. The monk whose sympathies are boundless is so like Brahma, the Buddha is telling the young brahmins, that at the death of his body his individuality completely disappears, the boundless having merged into the boundless. But what about the first stage, the moment of realisation?

Here the text provides the most powerful argument of all for my interpretation. I have already published in my book a closer examination of the Pali wording than is suitable for presentation in a lecture of this character; but there is no problem about presenting my main conclusions, even if I have to leave out the detailed evidence.

Why exactly are these four states called 'boundless'? The brahmin ideology held that everyone had the duty to perform certain acts. Primarily the texts were concerned with the duties of brahmin males, and the acts they had to perform were ritual acts. Correct performance of such acts kept one on the rails, as it were, and entailed good results, such as health and prosperity, until at death they ensured rebirth in a heaven. However, just as acts were finite, their results too were finite. The very terminology reveals that agriculture supplies the model: the act is a seed which, if all goes well, produces a harvest — but not an infinite harvest.

Of all the four states, from kindness to equanimity, the Buddha says that when they have been developed, the karma which is finite (*pamāṇa-kataṃ*) no longer remains. No more finite results. That can only mean freedom from rebirth.

But why am I beating about the bush? Each of these four states is called *ceto-vimutti*, 'liberation of the mind'. Does one need, could one have, anything more explicit?

I think not. But unfortunately the tradition disagrees with me, and obfuscates the whole issue. There are several terms in the canon for the goal, for nirvana, and *vimutti*, 'liberation', is one of the commonest. Sometimes this word is qualified as *ceto-vimutti*, 'liberation of the mind', or *paññā-vimutti*, 'liberation by understanding'. Often these two expressions are found together. In my recent book[16] I have examined the canonical use of these terms in great detail and shown that

[16] *Op. cit.*, pp. 96–120.

though they have a slightly different meaning they originally have the same referent: there is, I claim, just one 'liberation', and that is the realisation of nirvāna.

The developed, homogenised tradition, however, disagrees; it claims that there are two grades of *ceto-vimutti*, one of which is permanent and therefore the same as *paññā-vimutti*, 'liberation by insight', and the other of which is temporary, not the real thing. On the one hand, then, the tradition turns *ceto-vimutti* into a technical term, while on the other it claims that it is an *ambiguous* technical term.

The passage which most clearly envisages forms of *ceto-vimutti* which fall short of attaining nirvana is in the *Mahā-vedalla Sutta*.[17] This text is ascribed to Sāriputta, whom tradition holds to have been the greatest master, virtually the founder, of *abhidhamma*, the systematisation of Buddhist doctrine (*dhamma* in the singular) and classification of doctrinally posited entities (*dhamma* in the plural). Near the end of the sermon, Sāriputta mentions the possibility of coming out of (literally 'arising from') *ceto-vimutti*,[18] in terms which show that it is considered a meditative state. He is then asked whether various *ceto-vimutti* are different terms for the same referent or not. His initial reply suggests that what differentiates them is merely the mental route by which they are attained. However, he then resorts to word-play and says that the irreversible (*akuppā*) *ceto-vimutti* will always be free from passion, hatred and delusion; those 'liberations of the mind' which are not free of them are inferior. In other words, those 'liberations' are temporary states, not true liberation.

How did this strange use of language come about? I think it can be no coincidence that the first kind of temporary 'liberation' with which Sāriputta deals in this passage is precisely the 'boundless' one, and indeed that he quotes the *Tevijja Sutta*. We thus have before us, I believe, an example of early Buddhist debate. In my book I traced the stages of the process by which *ceto-vimutti* came to be differentiated from *paññā-vimutti*; but I did not say much to explain *why* this differentiation came about. I now think that the *Tevijja Sutta*, the very problem we are discussing, may lie at the root of this development. If one assumes that the monk who has cultivated infinite kindness literally goes to join Brahma when he dies, it follows from Buddhist cosmology that he has not been liberated and that the

[17] *Majjhima Nikāya sutta* 43.

[18] *Majjhima Nikāya* 1, 297, lines 4–8.

release of his mind can only have been temporary. Thus the *Tevijja Sutta*, if it is not to contradict itself within a few lines, must be taken by the literal-minded interpreter as proof that the word *ceto-vimutti* does not refer to definitive liberation.

There is also a more general reason why it may have been denied that *vimutti* in the *Tevijja Sutta* could refer to liberation. When the Buddha's teachings were systematised, nirvana had to be clearly defined, and the leading definition was that it was the same as the total elimination of passion (or greed), hatred and delusion. Those who adhered to this (quite unexceptionable) formulation were reluctant to accept that an account of nirvana which made no mention of eliminating passion, hatred and delusion could really be saying what it purported to say. Among such literalist interpreters, evidently, was Sāriputta, or rather the person who put those words into his mouth while formulating the *Mahā-vedalla Sutta*.

Developed Buddhist doctrine insists that the final step to liberation as taught by the Buddha consists of a gnosis with a specific content, an insight into the nature of the phenomenal world as being impermanent, dissatisfying and without essence. According to this view, there is a progression: morality, concentration, understanding; and each of these three factors is a pre-requisite for the next. The four boundless states are classified as forms of concentration, not of understanding, so they cannot be part of the culminating gnosis.

I am unconvinced by the rigidity of this view, even though it is fundamental to the Theravadin tradition. I am not denying for a moment that it may well go back to the Buddha himself; but then so may other formulations with an equal claim to authenticity. For example, take the noble eightfold path. This is enunciated in what is supposed to have been the Buddha's first sermon. It does not follow the progression 'morality, concentration, understanding', but ends with the stage of 'right concentration'. The fact that concentration comes eighth on a path, which must be a metaphor for a progression, has to be explained away by the exegetes with tortuous argument. Or take another example. Another text[19] has the Buddha say that where there is morality there is understanding, and vice versa, and that they purify each other just like the process of washing one's hands. This is in fact first said by a brahmin called Soṇadaṇḍa, but he is enunciating a position to which he has been driven back by the Buddha and the Buddha repeats his words to approve them.

[19] *Dīgha Nikāya* I, 124.

All these formulations, I repeat, seem to me to have an equal claim – a perfectly good one – to authenticity. I suspect that if someone had taxed the Buddha with thus being inconsistent in his account, he would have told them not to be silly. Similarly, I very much doubt that it was the Buddha who classified the four boundless states as coming into the category of concentration as opposed to morality or understanding. Why should they not be considered to come into all three categories?

Let me summarise my interpretation of the *Tevijja Sutta* in terms which show how the boundless states may be considered to partake of morality, concentration *and* gnosis.

According to the Upaniṣads, every significant act brings its result, but that result is finite. To escape this finitude requires gnosis; gnosis leads one to join *brahman*, that which pervades the entire universe as consciousness.[20]

The Buddha answers that the Buddhist monk pervades the universe with his consciousness, but it is an ethicised consciousness. In enlarging his mind to be (metaphorically) boundless, he emulates the brahmin gnostic who identifies with universal consciousness, and goes one better, showing the brahmin what he really should be doing. This moral activity is a kind of activity not envisaged by brahminism, for it has transcended finitude; it is at the same time a meditation, a harnessing of the mind, and a gnosis, a limitless illumination, albeit not so expressed in the usual apophatic terms.

In my book[21] I have supplied further corroborative evidence for my interpretation of the *Tevijja Sutta* by discussing another text[22] in the Pali canon in which King Pasenadi consults the Buddha and the Buddha recasts something said in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* to make it mean that one should be kind, substituting an ethical for a metaphysical message. However, rather than repeat what I have published elsewhere, let me amplify my argument in a different direction.

There are quite a few indications in the Buddhist tradition that the literalism of the Theravadin tradition has left infinite kindness and compassion with too humble a role, that the spirit of the tradition is uncomfortable with the letter

[20] The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* does not seem to suggest that the world does not exist or is an illusion. It is just less real than brahman.

[21] *Op. cit.*, pp. 62–4.

[22] *Saṃyutta Nikāya* I, 75.

of the texts as it interprets them. It is well known that in the Mahāyāna the Buddha has both infinite wisdom and infinite compassion; they complement each other exactly like morality and understanding in the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta*. The same is however said by Buddhaghosa in the *Visuddhi-magga*, when he expounds the Buddha's quality as 'perfect in knowledge and conduct'. 'He knows through omniscience what is good and harmful for all beings, and through compassion he warns them of harm and exhorts them to do good ... so that his disciples are on the good way, not on the bad way like the disciples of those imperfect in knowledge and conduct, who do things like mortifying the flesh.'[13] There is a long commentary on this, which says things like: 'It was through understanding that he felt revulsion for the round of rebirths, and through compassion that he bore it. It was through understanding that he fully understood others' suffering, and through compassion that he undertook to counteract it... It was through understanding that he himself crossed over, and through compassion that he brought others across.'[14]

Even more striking is the way in which Buddhaghosa ends chapter IX of the *Visuddhimagga*, the chapter on the four *brahma-vihāra*. Constrained no doubt by canonical texts, he has just explained exactly how high in the universe each of the four states in turn can take you. However, he then says that they 'bring to perfection' all the other good qualities of a Buddha, here called a 'Great Being'. He writes: 'For the Great Beings' minds retain their balance by giving preference to beings' welfare, by dislike of beings' suffering, by desire for the various successes achieved by beings to last, and by impartiality towards all beings.'[15] And he goes on to apply this to each of the Ten Perfections, the moral qualities which every Buddha is held to bring to their highest pitch. In effect, Buddhaghosa is bypassing the problem of exactly what role the four divine states play in the spiritual development of an ordinary practitioner and saying that for a Buddha they are fundamental.

But what about the ordinary Buddhist practitioner? I suppose the most famous of all Pali canonical texts is the *Dhammapada*, the collection of more than

[13] *Visuddhi magga* VII, § 32, trans. Ñyāṇamoli.

[14] *Paramattha mañjusā* 192, quoted in translation by Ñyāṇamoli, p. 211.

[15] *Visuddhi magga* IX, § 124, trans. Ñyāṇamoli.

400 single stanzas on morality. I find it strange that number 368 has not attracted more attention. It says: 'The monk who dwells in kindness, with faith in the Buddha's teaching, may attain the peaceful state, the blissful cessation of conditioning.'

As philologists of Sanskrit or Pali will know, one need not attach much weight to the fact that the verse says 'may attain' (in the optative) rather than 'will attain' in the indicative. Moreover, in the version of this verse preserved in the *Mahāvastu*[16], a text of another school which is generally considered old, i.e. to date from before the Christian era, the verb *is* in fact in the indicative (*adhigacchati*). The verse is in fact saying that kindness is salvific, and it is surely no coincidence that the term for nirvana, 'the peaceful state', is the same as that used at the opening of the *Metta Sutta*. Thus the author of the *Dhammapada* verse apparently interprets the *Metta Sutta* to mean that it is kindness which will get one to nirvana. Tradition holds, of course, that the author of both poems is the Buddha himself.

In my published summary of this lecture, I referred to the common misconception that the Mahāyāna came into being as a protest against the alleged selfishness of Theravada Buddhism, and mentioned that a similar accusation already appears in the Pali Canon in the mouth of a brahmin. This occurs in a text to which I have already referred.[17] A brahmin called Saṅgārava says that brahmins who carry out and institute sacrifices are thereby gaining a merit which benefits more than one body. (Presumably he means that they benefit both the priest and the clients, and also that they can affect more than one life, since they take one to heaven after death.) By contrast, says Saṅgārava, a person who renounces the world and acquires selfcontrol benefits himself alone. To this the Buddha replies that by preaching the truth that he has discovered he puts hundreds of thousands of beings on the same path, and he gets Saṅgārava to agree that he thus benefits very many people.

The Mahāyāna emphasises the virtue of compassion, the second in the set of four boundless states, while the Theravada tends rather to speak of the first, kindness. This is hardly more than a purely verbal difference. Moreover, Mahāyāna exegesis presents as the supreme case of compassion the fact that the Buddha

[16] *Mahāvastu* ed. É. Senart, vol. III, Paris 1897, p. 421, lines 18–19.

[17] See note 10 above.

took the trouble to preach the truth that he discovered, thus enabling living beings to find an escape from suffering. In a series of lectures at Oxford, Prof. Takasaki Jikido showed that this interpretation of the Buddha's supreme compassion is consistent throughout the history of Indian Buddhism. He did not cite the conversation with Saṅgārava, in which the word compassion (*karuṇā*) is not specifically mentioned; but it carries the same message.

I am not denying that the Mahāyāna as such, by recommending that everyone aim to attain both omniscience and perfect compassion, laid enormous stress on altruism; nor am I denying that the Theravada tradition as displayed in doctrinal texts has comparatively little to say about kindness and compassion. However, I hope to have demonstrated that there are texts in the Pali canon which not only commend kindness but value it so highly that it can be a means to attaining nirvana.

Is this kindness what Christians mean by 'love', or is it merely benevolence? This is an important question, but I doubt whether it admits of a definitive answer. The two texts I have mainly discussed, the *Metta Sutta* and the *Terijja Sutta*, refer only to thoughts; I quoted the *Metta Sutta* saying 'One should keep one's mind on this.' This is perhaps not surprising if one recalls that the Buddha assumed that anyone who took his message seriously would become a monk or nun and try to live in meditative seclusion. Monks were exhorted, for instance, to tend each other when they were ill, and the Buddha set the example in this. On the other hand the tradition is so conservative that I think it is true that wherever the words kindness and compassion are mentioned in the texts, the reference is to thought, not to acts of kindness – other than preaching.

I would, very tentatively, sum up my impression of early Buddhist kindness as follows. The texts I have cited, and many many others, show a strong preference for negative expression: the monk who dwells with Brahma is free from hatred, free from ill will. The Buddha's advice to King Pasenadi is that everyone loves themselves, so 'one who loves self should not harm others'. It is this, non-harming, that the early texts continually emphasise, rather than positive acts of goodness. Moreover, in the systematic presentation of the Theravadin *abhidhamma*, kindness (*metta*) is actually defined negatively, as absence of hatred (*adoso*),[18] while on the other hand it is said to be a component of every morally wholesome (*kusala*) thought,[19] and therefore not necessarily directed at any object.[20] This shows on the one hand that even the systematisers had to leave a fundamental role for kindness, while on the other that they rendered 'kindness' somewhat bloodless.

[18] *Dhamma-saṅgaṇi* § 1056.

If one compares Buddhism with Christianity, one notices that Buddhism has no place for righteous anger, and that the Buddhist religious tradition, nobly exemplified in our day by the Dalai Lama, unflinchingly preaches non-violence and pacifism. But let us, here in this Academy, not confuse what Buddhists do with what the Buddha said or meant. The evidence for the latter is clouded and fragmentary. Nevertheless, I feel confident that he was the great ethiciser of Indian religion and hence of a large part of the world, and that he preached an ethic not only of self-restraint but also of love.

[19] *Ibid.* § 1054.

[20] I am greatly indebted to Sarah Shaw for drawing my attention to this text.

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Carefulness

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The thought of *bodhicitta* has now been generated in our minds. Next we come to three chapters devoted to protecting it from deterioration.

This mind of ours has the potential for accomplishing all the qualities of Buddhahood. But these qualities are temporarily obscured by our mistaken belief in the existence of an 'I' and by self-centredness and negative emotions. These are the powerful enemies of the positive attitude that we have generated. They live within our minds; they are not outside.

Were they substantial, external enemies, we might, even if they were armed with missiles, have a little time in which to run away from them. But there is no escape and nowhere to hide from these internal enemies. As circumstances arise, all sorts of negative emotions, such as desire or anger, can suddenly spring up. There are numerous antidotes for these. The most important thing, though, is to apply carefulness, attentiveness, and mindfulness. We need to be always on our guard, so that if a negative emotion or thought arises, or is about to arise, we are able to use these tools and to employ the antidote immediately, at the very moment that the mind is disturbed. When we practise in this way, with carefulness, negative emotions become less and less powerful.

Carefulness is the subject of this fifth chapter.

1 The children of the Conqueror, who thus
Have firmly grasped this attitude of *bodhicitta*,
Must never turn aside from it,
Striving never to transgress its disciplines.

4 For if I bind myself with pledges
But fail to carry out my words in deed.
Then, each and every being thus betrayed,
What destiny must lie in store for me?

This bodhicitta that we have generated has not been forced upon us — we have taken the bodhicitta vow voluntarily. We have taken it with all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as witnesses and for the sake of all beings. So to go against this vow is to show scant respect for the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. We will have lied to them and betrayed all beings as well. This

is a very serious failure.

We should therefore make every effort not to spoil our bodhicitta. We must devote all our energy to this purpose. Moreover, there is no knowing when death may overtake us. At the moment, we may be in good health, but life can end suddenly. Let us make the best use of our days, being careful all the time. It is a great mistake to be lax today, saying that we will be more strict tomorrow. We should try to discipline our minds constantly so that we can become the good people we promised to be when we took the vow. This involves watching the mind persistently.

All of us wish to be happy and do not want suffering — we do not need to be told this. But on the other hand, we do not know what we should do or avoid in order to get what makes us happy. On the other hand, because our negative emotions are so strong, we engage in negative actions even though we can see what is wrong with them. It is the emotions that are the real enemy to each of us being a good person.

28 Anger, lust — these enemies of mine —
Are handless, footless, lacking other faculties;
They have no courage, no intelligence;
How then have they made me their slave?

29 It is I who let them lurk within my heart,
Allowing them to harm me at their pleasure.
And I suffer all without resentment;
Thus my misplaced and unworthy patience!

32 The life span of my foes, defiled emotions,
Is never ending and has no beginning;
Of all my other enemies,
None have such longevity as this.

Those whom we ordinarily consider to be our enemies can only be so for one lifetime, at the most. But negative emotions have been harming us from time without beginning. They are truly the worst of enemies.

33 If my other foes I serve and coset,
They, in turn, will give me all their aid and favour,
But should I serve my dark, defiled emotions,
They will only harm and draw me back to grief.

There are always ways in which one can gradually make friends with an enemy. But the more we try to make friends with negative emotions the stronger they become and the more they are able to harm us. If we think

about it, as long as they continue to inhabit our minds, staying with us like close friends, we will never be happy. As long as anger, pride, and jealousy are in our minds, we will always have external enemies. If we get rid of one enemy today, tomorrow another will appear. It is endless. While we may be able temporarily to free ourselves of enemies, with negative emotions entrenched in our minds, we shall never find lasting happiness.

43 This shall be my all-consuming passion;
Filled with rancour, I will wage my war.
Such emotion, though indeed defilement,
Will destroy defilement, and I will not spurn it.

Anyone who practises the Dharma has a duty to do battle with the enemy — negative emotions. If we wish to achieve ultimate happiness, we have to use the antidote to fight against this enemy. In doing so, we may encounter difficulties from time to time. But in an ordinary war, the trials and difficulties people go through are accepted and even encourage them to fight harder against the enemy. Moreover, in the ordinary world, a warrior's wounds are considered as signs of bravery, like medals. So as practising Buddhists fighting this real enemy, whose very nature is harm, we should expect difficulties, and treat them as signs of victory.

An ordinary enemy may escape to a safe place only to marshal his forces again and attack us once more. But once we have banished the negative emotions from our minds by using the true antidote, they have nowhere to hide and cannot return to harm us. However, we do not need anything as powerful as the nuclear arms one might use to annihilate an ordinary enemy. For negative emotions are actually impotent, based as they are on ignorance, which itself has no strength. This inner enemy is easily vanquished with the weapon of discriminating wisdom, which knows the true nature of the emotions.

47 And yet defilements are not found within the object,
Nor yet within the faculties, nor somewhere in between.
And if not elsewhere, where is their abode,
Whence to wreak their havoc on the world?
They are mirages, and so take heart:
Banish fear from your mind and strive to know them.
Why endure the needless pains of hell?

When we investigate carefully, we cannot find something, some powerful enemy, called negative emotions. In reality, there is nothing there. For example, when we experience aversion or attachment, these emotions are not located in the ugly or beautiful object that causes them, nor are they

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His function, his associates, his rebirth

Marco Pallis

Chapter 8 extracted from Marco Pallis, *The Way and the Mountain*
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Ever since Tibet and its institutions began to exercise the attention of people in the West, that is to say since the beginning of this century, the Dalai Lama and the, to us, very strange manner of his selection has been an object of widespread curiosity; in a larger way this curiosity has attached to the existence, here and there throughout the Tibetan world, of those revered figures labelled by travellers, though most improperly, with the title of 'Living Buddhas', of whom the Dalai Lama, as also the Panchen Lama (often miscalled 'Tashi Lama'), are but two examples among others. However, the fact that the Dalai Lama is also the temporal ruler of Tibet — or was until the time of the Chinese Communist invasion — has focused interest on his person in a very special way, since nowhere else in the world is the supreme governor of a country chosen by the method of 'reincarnation' — we use the term here advisedly, though as will be shown further on, it is a loose term and does not correspond very exactly with the facts of the case. First of all, however, let us try to define the position of the Dalai Lama as he appears in the eyes of his own subjects.

It is important to understand from the outset that that function of his which chiefly attracts the interest of Europeans, namely his political rulership, important though it is in its own way, must yet be counted as a sideline; one might almost say that a similar, though less categorical reservation applies to his ecclesiastical status, as an eminent member of the Buddhist clergy, since in this sense the Dalai Lama can count a number of colleagues of more or less comparable rank both in Tibet itself and in other Buddhist countries. If the Dalai Lama has sometimes been likened to the Pope and his great residence on the Potala Hill overlooking the city of Lhasa to the Vatican, this comparison contains a fallacy, since his functions are not specifically related to the defining of doctrine, as in the case of the Roman Pontiff. It may well happen that spiritual knowledge and therefore a qualification to pronounce on doctrinal matters with sureness is also to be found in a Dalai Lama, but when this happens it must be ascribed, not to any specific capacity inherent in his office, as some might be led to suppose, but to a metaphysical realization, the fruits of personal endeavour in the spiritual field.

In fact, the Dalai Lama's essential function is neither the exercise of the Temporal Power nor yet the Spiritual Authority (though both of these belong to him in eminent degree), but it is a function bound up with the fact that he

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Reference has just been made to the fact that Chenrezig is the Protector of the Tibetan tradition and the lands where it holds sway, and this likewise defines the primary and essential function of the Dalai Lama: his presence at the heart of the Tibetan world is a guarantee of heavenly protection, hence the title of 'Precious Protector' under which he is generally known. Through his person flows an uninterrupted current of spiritual influence, characteristically compassionate in its 'flavour', and it can be said, there-

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fore, that the Dalai Lama's office, in relation to the world generally and Tibet in particular, is neither chiefly one of rulership nor teaching but an 'activity of presence', one that is operative independently of anything he may, as an individual, choose to do or not to do.

If it should seem astonishing to some people that a spiritual influence should thus be transmitted through a succession of human intermediaries, all one need answer is that this is no more impossible or unlikely, than that such transmission should become focused on a place or an object, such as the grotto at Lourdes, for instance, or a wonder-working relic: for it is evident, if one thinks about it, that a power deriving from a higher order of reality, as in this case, would not encounter any obstacle in penetrating the substance of something belonging to an order limited by conditions from which the higher order in question is free — which is all that is meant when using terms like 'lower' and 'higher' in such a context. Incidentally, an understanding of the metaphysical principle here illustrated will help to remove a common stumbling-block in the way of those who nowadays find miracles and supernatural happenings generally hard of acceptance; since it follows from the same principle that an event which at one level of reality, such as that of our world, not only seems but also is miraculous, yet remains perfectly normal at another level of existence, one that is free from some or all of our limitations, so that the event in question can properly be regarded at one and the same time as a miracle and as a natural happening, without any kind of contradiction being implied thereby. Thus to the sufferer whose disease is lifted from him at Lourdes the miraculous nature of his cure is no figure of speech but actual fact, and we as his fellow-humans will likewise share in his attitude; but to the power that works the cure (in this case the Blessed Virgin) the effect produced is but a normal function of her own spiritual eminence, or, as the Tibetans would say, it is the 'skilful means' which must inevitably accompany knowledge such as that spiritual degree itself implies.

After this brief excursion into a wider field, some further illustration of the Dalai Lama's function can be provided by comparing it once again, but this time in a positive sense, with that of the Pope. The succession of Roman Bishops and Dalai Lamas are alike in that each vehicles a specific spiritual influence, instructive and protective respectively, and in both cases the exercise of the function in question is unaffected by the individual character of the holder of the office for the time being,[2] whose competence can only be

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The Dalai Lama

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His function, his associates, his rebirth

Marco Pallis

Chapter 8 extracted from Marco Pallis, *The Way and the Mountain*
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Ever since Tibet and its institutions began to exercise the attention of people in the West, that is to say since the beginning of this century, the Dalai Lama and the, to us, very strange manner of his selection has been an object of widespread curiosity; in a larger way this curiosity has attached to the existence, here and there throughout the Tibetan world, of those revered figures labelled by travellers, though most improperly, with the title of 'Living Buddhas', of whom the Dalai Lama, as also the Panchen Lama (often miscalled 'Tashi Lama'), are but two examples among others. However, the fact that the Dalai Lama is also the temporal ruler of Tibet — or was until the time of the Chinese Communist invasion — has focused interest on his person in a very special way, since nowhere else in the world is the supreme governor of a country chosen by the method of 'reincarnation' — we use the term here advisedly, though as will be shown further on, it is a loose term and does not correspond very exactly with the facts of the case. First of all, however, let us try to define the position of the Dalai Lama as he appears in the eyes of his own subjects.

It is important to understand from the outset that that function of his which chiefly attracts the interest of Europeans, namely his political rulership, important though it is in its own way, must yet be counted as a sideline; one might almost say that a similar, though less categorical reservation applies to his ecclesiastical status, as an eminent member of the Buddhist clergy, since in this sense the Dalai Lama can count a number of colleagues of more or less comparable rank both in Tibet itself and in other Buddhist countries. If the Dalai Lama has sometimes been likened to the Pope and his great residence on the Potala Hill overlooking the city of Lhasa to the Vatican, this comparison contains a fallacy, since his functions are not specifically related to the defining of doctrine, as in the case of the Roman Pontiff. It may well happen that spiritual knowledge and therefore a qualification to pronounce on doctrinal matters with sureness is also to be found in a Dalai Lama, but when this happens it must be ascribed, not to any specific capacity inherent in his office, as some might be led to suppose, but to a metaphysical realization, the fruits of personal endeavour in the spiritual field.

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Reference has several times been made to the tests to which children believed to be Tulkus are subjected in order to substantiate or invalidate their claim. The question may well arise as to whether these tests are always honestly carried out or whether sometimes undue influence is not exerted by interested parties. Though it is impossible to answer this question outright in view of the number of cases concerned as well as the large period covered, one has the impression that until fairly recently a 'simoniacal' election to the position of Lama Tulku was, to say the least of it, highly unlikely, because the whole weight of tradition was there to impose observance of the proper conditions and, still more important, because people, almost without exception, were in a frame of mind when the consequences, both temporal and posthumous, of attempted sacrilege would have seemed too appalling for anyone to risk incurring them.

Of late years, however, it must be admitted that some suspicious occurrences have taken place in this sphere and that the spiritual authorities whose duty it is to watch over all matters of traditional regularity have sometimes seemed to take up a more passive attitude in the face of possible abuse than would have been the case some time ago: all such relaxation of vigilance must be reckoned a danger sign, especially at a time when the pressure of profane influences is bringing ever increasing 'scandal' all over the world. It is said, for instance, that there has been a noticeable increase in the number of Tulkus professedly discovered in well-to-do families, which formerely happened but rarely; the reason for this may well be a wish, unconscious or half avowed, in the minds of some of the members of the lamaseries concerned, to draw the wealth of a big family towards their own community by electing its child as abbot. These cases are still probably few, but they do nevertheless provide a cause for anxiety. Finally one can also ask oneself whether the credentials of all of the many Tulkus popularly admitted as such are equally reliable, for in some cases at least it is doubtful whether every precaution has been taken to verify the authenticity of the claim to this position of spiritual eminence. Here again, the traditional authority alone is competent to make inquisition into such matters for obviously they cannot be decided off-hand, on mere suspicion or under pressure from unqualified opinion.

One last question now lies before us, as being likely to spring up in the minds of some readers: why, they might ask, has the phenomenon of the Lama Tulkus been confined to the Tibetan world and might not something of the same kind have been expected to occur in other places also? To this question a number of answers may be given, some of them partly conjectural, none of them watertight: rather is it a case of 'situating' the whole question accurately and leaving intelligence to draw the right conclusions than of trying to find a nicely rounded off solution; for slick answers, ever if it succeeds in satisfying the mind for a time, is ultimately always open to

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First of all, it is good to remind oneself of the truth that the 'Spirit bloweth where it listeth', 'playfully' as the Hindus put it, and also that each spiritual manifestation is in its way unique and if it takes form, this will necessarily imply a certain degree of 'localization', as for example in the already mentioned case of Lourdes. One might as well ask why the Blessed Virgin chose that place and not Perpignan in order to manifest her healing power; but this question is really pointless, for after all what was to prevent her? Moreover every manifestation in the world reflects symbolically the uniqueness of the Creative Act which caused it to be, hence the impossibility of duplicating even the most insignificant being or event. In a final analysis not only those phenomena that move us to wonder but every phenomenon whatever is transparently sacred (for him that has eyes to see) because it reveals its prototype, just as, to one of profane mind, it will seem grossly opaque to match the hardness of his own heart, in the sight of which Heaven itself cannot but assume the guise of Hell; in fact it is a selfsame reality that underlies both states, which of them will make its appearance depending upon the attitude of the beholding subject, a truth which Buddhism has thrown into particular relief.

These more general considerations apart, two reasons can be advanced in order to explain the incidence of Tulkuhood in Tibet and associated countries and not elsewhere, one being connected with the extreme vigour of the traditional spirit in that region, which acts as a catalyst for special graces: this is a first reason, the second is complimentary to it, namely that it may also be a case of this phenomenon sometimes occurring in other places but, in the absence of traditional criteria whereby it can be recognized, remaining unnoticed. To these two reasons a third can be added: in the case of other traditional civilizations still substantially intact, the occurrence there of different but equivalent phenomena may well, on pain of redundancy, exclude this particular form of spirituality. Probably the truth lies somewhere between all three explanations.

It is also worth noting one or two cases, as recorded in history, which, if not identical with the case of the Tibetan Tulkus, are at least comparable to it in a highly suggestive manner. One is the succession of sacred cats in ancient Egypt which acted as supports for the influence personified as the goddess Pasht: these consecrated animals were also recognized by the presence of special signs and when one died its successor was searched for in much the same way as in Tibet.

Still more extraordinary is the case of the identification, by the Islamic order of Begtashi dervishes, of one of their own saints with the Christian St Spiridon who lived many centuries earlier — he was one of the Fathers of the Council of Nicaea where he won fame by silencing the heresiarch Arius. The body of this saint now lies in a chapel in the Island of Corfu and this

shrine has been greatly enriched by gifts received from Muslim as well as Christian donors, thanks to the traditional identification mentioned above. If such a fact surprises us, this would hardly be the case with a Tibetan who would easily explain the matter in terms of two Tulkus of the selfsame influence.

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In the course of this survey of a complex subject we have repeatedly alluded to the fact that the essential function in the case of both Dalai Lama and other Lama Tulkus is one of presence. Personal presence therefore is most important, so that to move too long or too far afield is the worst thing that could happen, as far as the Lama's principle function is concerned.

When the crisis brought about by the Chinese ultimatum was at its height I happened to be staying in Kalimpong, a small market town on the Indian side of the frontier. Great was the excitement when it became known that the Dalai Lama and his government were on their way down from Lhasa with the intention, as everyone then believed, of fleeing into India. There was even talk in some circles of their eventually being taken overseas to some spot whence the voice of national resistance could make itself heard. At Kalimpong itself a house was already prepared for the sacred sovereign's reception and when at last he reached the Chumbi valley just short of the border, the final step across was thought to be a matter of hours. But then he — or his advisers, for he was still very young — hesitated and for several weeks they stayed where they were, while the Chinese for their part halted their advance. With hope of outside help fading, negotiations began and eventually ended, as everyone knows, in a capitulation which left Tibet with a faint semblance of local autonomy but incorporated her to all intents and purposes, as a 'colonial' enclave, in the new Chinese state. Foreign friends of Tibet who in all sincerity had advocated the Dalai Lama's escape into exile were disappointed, yet I believe that that decision to stay, hard though it must have been in some ways, was a right one at that time and having regard to the peculiar nature of his spiritual ministry; to have interrupted that ministry in time of great need for purely political reasons however strong would have undermined the traditional loyalties as nothing else could have done under the circumstances: certainly this was the view expressed by all Tibetans with whom I discussed the matter — and I made a point of doing so on every possible occasion; whether they were monks or laymen, officials or commoners, rich or poor, all were agreed that if the Dalai Lama's presence were removed from Tibet it would be a calamity that would have incalculable repercussions in every sphere. Never, I believe, has there been greater unanimity of opinion among any people nor a clearer understanding of the reasons governing the choice between two courses. For once one could fairly apply the dictum '*vox populi, vox dei*', since it was unquestion-

ably the spiritual interest which, as against other more worldly considerations, prevailed.

The traditional doctrine itself helped to encourage this decision: one of the names under which the Bodhisattva Chenrezig goes is the All-Merciful Shepherd-like Lord, concerning whom it is said that the shepherd declines to enter the sheepfold before the last of his flock are safely inside; only then does he enter and close the door: the sheep are all suffering beings of the universe 'down to the last blade of grass' and the gate is the gate of Enlightenment that leads into the sheepfold of *nirvāṇa*. This redemptive symbolism, reminiscent as it is of the Good Shepherd of the Gospel expresses the very spirit of the Mahāyāna: if then the Dalai Lama, at his own level chose to model his conduct upon that of his prototype, can one criticise him? The good shepherd does not abandon his flock, especially when wolves are about.

The story however has a sequel. Sometime in the summer of 1954 reports appeared in the papers according to which the Dalai Lama, now grown up, was being pressed by the Chinese to go to Peking for a stay of unspecified duration: this to the great distress of his own people, who were vociferous in their protests and pleadings. At the very time, almost at the hour when he was setting out on his enforced journey a fearful flood, caused by the collapse of the barriers of a lake which then discharged itself into a river, swept over the southern part of Tibet, carrying death and devastation to all the places along the river bank; a conjunction of events sufficiently extraordinary to cause some to ask themselves whether this was not perhaps a heaven-sent warning, called forth by a long series of profanations of which this was but the most recent example. Nor can such an explanation, in any similar case, be ruled out; for the two things, natural happening and supernatural interference, do not exclude one another in the complex pattern that the causality of the universe is continually weaving around us. Even a quite ordinary event, in fact, displays two faces, the one apparent to the senses and the other intelligible through its symbolism, and it needs the art of discernment in order to read beyond and between the apparent 'facts' to the point of being able to interpret the 'signs of the times', and discernment itself is pre-eminently a spiritual gift.

The Dalai Lama's absence at Peking proved shorter than had been expected: in heeding popular outcry and letting him return the Chinese acted in a politic way which, had they followed it more wholeheartedly, might have taken them far towards winning over the Tibetans whose chief wish was to be left undisturbed; an older China might have profited by this chance, but with the Communists their ideological fury came in the way. For a time, indeed, Lhasa breathed again, hoping against hope — it was the lull preceding a new still more violent tempest which, starting from the easterly provinces of Kham and Amdo where Chinese interference was being most

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In the course of this survey of a complex subject we have repeatedly alluded to the fact that the essential function in the case of both Dalai Lama and other Lama Tulkus is one of presence. Personal presence therefore is most important, so that to move too long or too far afield is the worst thing that could happen, as far as the Lama's principle function is concerned.

When the crisis brought about by the Chinese ultimatum was at its height I happened to be staying in Kalimpong, a small market town on the Indian side of the frontier. Great was the excitement when it became known that the Dalai Lama and his government were on their way down from Lhasa with the intention, as everyone then believed, of fleeing into India. There was even talk in some circles of their eventually being taken overseas to some spot whence the voice of national resistance could make itself heard. At Kalimpong itself a house was already prepared for the sacred sovereign's reception and when at last he reached the Chumbi valley just short of the border, the final step across was thought to be a matter of hours. But then he — or his advisers, for he was still very young — hesitated and for several weeks they stayed where they were, while the Chinese for their part halted their advance. With hope of outside help fading, negotiations began and eventually ended, as everyone knows, in a capitulation which left Tibet with a faint semblance of local autonomy but incorporated her to all intents and purposes, as a 'colonial' enclave, in the new Chinese state. Foreign friends of Tibet who in all sincerity had advocated the Dalai Lama's escape into exile were disappointed, yet I believe that that decision to stay, hard though it must have been in some ways, was a right one at that time and having regard to the peculiar nature of his spiritual ministry; to have interrupted that ministry in time of great need for purely political reasons however strong would have undermined the traditional loyalties as nothing else could have done under the circumstances: certainly this was the view expressed by all Tibetans with whom I discussed the matter — and I made a point of doing so on every possible occasion; whether they were monks or laymen, officials or commoners, rich or poor, all were agreed that if the Dalai Lama's presence were removed from Tibet it would be a calamity that would have incalculable repercussions in every sphere. Never, I believe, has there been greater unanimity of opinion among any people nor a clearer understanding of the reasons governing the choice between two courses. For once one could fairly apply the dictum '*vox populi, vox dei*', since it was unquestion-

ably the spiritual interest which, as against other more worldly considerations, prevailed.

The traditional doctrine itself helped to encourage this decision: one of the names under which the Bodhisattva Chenrezig goes is the All-Merciful Shepherd-like Lord, concerning whom it is said that the shepherd declines to enter the sheepfold before the last of his flock are safely inside; only then does he enter and close the door: the sheep are all suffering beings of the universe 'down to the last blade of grass' and the gate is the gate of Enlightenment that leads into the sheepfold of *nirvāṇa*. This redemptive symbolism, reminiscent as it is of the Good Shepherd of the Gospel expresses the very spirit of the Mahāyāna: if then the Dalai Lama, at his own level chose to model his conduct upon that of his prototype, can one criticise him? The good shepherd does not abandon his flock, especially when wolves are about.

The story however has a sequel. Sometime in the summer of 1954 reports appeared in the papers according to which the Dalai Lama, now grown up, was being pressed by the Chinese to go to Peking for a stay of unspecified duration: this to the great distress of his own people, who were vociferous in their protests and pleadings. At the very time, almost at the hour when he was setting out on his enforced journey a fearful flood, caused by the collapse of the barriers of a lake which then discharged itself into a river, swept over the southern part of Tibet, carrying death and devastation to all the places along the river bank; a conjunction of events sufficiently extraordinary to cause some to ask themselves whether this was not perhaps a heaven-sent warning, called forth by a long series of profanations of which this was but the most recent example. Nor can such an explanation, in any similar case, be ruled out; for the two things, natural happening and super-natural interference, do not exclude one another in the complex pattern that the causality of the universe is continually weaving around us. Even a quite ordinary event, in fact, displays two faces, the one apparent to the senses and the other intelligible through its symbolism, and it needs the art of discernment in order to read beyond and between the apparent 'facts' to the point of being able to interpret the 'signs of the times', and discernment itself is pre-eminently a spiritual gift.

The Dalai Lama's absence at Peking proved shorter than had been expected: in heeding popular outcry and letting him return the Chinese acted in a politic way which, had they followed it more wholeheartedly, might have taken them far towards winning over the Tibetans whose chief wish was to be left undisturbed; an older China might have profited by this chance, but with the Communists their ideological fury came in the way. For a time, indeed, Lhasa breathed again, hoping against hope — it was the lull preceding a new still more violent tempest which, starting from the easterly provinces of Kham and Amdo where Chinese interference was being most

such a terrible waste.

May you gain Insight into the Truth in this very life, while you are still breathing and realise the ultimate goal of life whatever you like to call it, which remains permanent and unchanging at all times.

The King of Devas as Student of the Buddha

Susan Elbaum Jootla

One of the main epithets for the Buddha is "teacher of gods and men". Although there are many more *suttas* where he taught human beings, *devas* often came to pay respects to the Buddha and seek his guidance. Perhaps the most notable congregation of higher beings visiting the Buddha and the Ariya Sangha is described in the "Maha Samaya Sutta" (Dīgha Nikāya 20). Then, *devas* of the six celestial sensuous *(kama)* planes just above the human one and *brahmas* of the fine material sphere (*rupavacara*, above the *deva* planes), from numerous world systems in all directions gathered to hear the Buddha's words.

To the modern meditator trying to purify his mind, more relevant perhaps is the very next discourse in the Dīgha Nikāya, "Sakka's Questions". Here Sakka, king of the *devas* of the Realm of the Thirty-three (*Tāvatiṁsa*), has an audience with the Blessed One. He had already been a loyal disciple of the Buddha for a long time, Sakka had attended him at the time of his final birth, at the Great Renunciation, and under the Bodhi tree, and several times proclaimed his confidence in the unique qualities of the Tathāgatha. We will study "Sakka's Questions" in which the leader of the *devas* sought and found solutions to a series of profound Dhamma dilemmas that had been troubling him. The core of this dialogue will be examined to see what human meditators of the present day can learn from it about working towards Nibbāna.[1]

From his vantage point in the *Tāvatiṁsa* celestial plane, Sakka was a keen observer of the behaviour of human, and other classes of, beings. He had perceived that while creatures would like to live with each other peacefully, they are rarely able to do so. (This is certainly true nowadays too.) The first thing he asks the Buddha is why this is so. What is it that forces humans and gods alike to live full of hatred and hostility which brings them so much misery?

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The Buddha explains that it is due to two mental factors which exist in the minds of all non-Ariyas: jealousy and avarice *(issa-macchariya)*. Because of these qualities most of the aggression of the world develops, Sakka concurs. As his aim is to do something about this *dukkha*, he wants to know more. So he next asks about the origin of jealousy and avarice: "Owing to the presence of what do they arise, owing to the absence of what do they not arise?" One can see from this query that Sakka already has a clear concept of cause and effect *(paticcasamuppāda)*. When the cause is there the effect will come; remove the cause and the effect cannot arise.

Behind jealousy and avarice, the Buddha tells the king of the gods, lie liking and disliking, and the source of both liking and disliking is desire *(chanda)*. Desire as used here, is a very fundamental mental factor. Such *chanda* is synonymous with greed *(lobha)*, one of the basic root motivations behind evil actions. It is also the second Noble Truth, craving *(taṇhā)*, the cause of *dukkha*.

As this is such a basic problem, Sakka wants to understand the even deeper causes that trigger desire. The Buddha tells him it is thinking *(vitakka)* that leads to desire. Although he does not specify what sort of thinking, the Buddha here must be referring to unsystematic mental activity, the kind of random thoughts the untrained mind indulges in. This can be seen from the next and final link in the causal sequence. For when Sakka asks about the cause of thinking the reply is "the tendency to proliferation". This is what brings about thinking which leads to desire, and *that* brings on like and dislike. They in turn condition jealousy and avarice and ultimately the conflicts in the day to day lives of beings.

Sakka has more questions to ask: the next ones are more directly practical. He is now trying to discover how to destroy this sequence that leads to so much *dukkha*. He requests the Buddha to explain what a monk (or meditator, one might add) should do to eliminate this tendency to endless proliferation of mental activity which creates kamma, rebirth, and misery over and over again.

The Buddha replies that one should not blindly follow after every feeling that arises in the mind. Rather one should only pursue a feeling - be it happy, unhappy or neutral - if doing so contributes to the growth of wholesome *(kusala)* phenomena.[2] If one sees that pursuing any particular feeling, of *any* of the three qualities, makes unwholesome *(akusala)* tendencies stronger, then one should quickly drop that sensation, not get carried away with wanting more of it or trying to get rid of it by any means at hand. This is very important and takes a great deal of sustained effort.

To train the mind to eliminate the causes of *dukkha*, one has to learn to observe where feelings are leading. Normally, of course, we blithely race off after anything agreeable. Any kind of "happiness" is assumed to be worth going for.

2. At the end of this section the Buddha adds, "Now, of such happiness as is accompanied by thinking and pondering, and that which is not so accompanied, the latter is the more excellent. The same applies to unhappiness and to equanimity." This is a reference to *jhana* so we do not discuss it as few modern yogis develop those absorption states.

On the other hand, we try to shove out of mind anything painful. But the meditator or monk who has Nibb na as his or her goal cannot let this process go unchecked. For such yogis the criteria for action should only, and always, be that is it conducive to that highest aim. Whatever feelings pull in the other direction must be avoided and put aside as unworthy.

This is a job to be tackled systematically. First one has to learn to see feelings as they arise without getting carried away by them. Second, one has to consider where actions taken based on these feelings are leading. Third, it is necessary to put on the brakes so one does not create *akusala*, be it in pursuit of pleasure, in fleeing pain or in ignoring neutral feelings. Awareness is central to each stage of this. Without clear comprehension of feelings, their repercussions, the distinction between *kusala* and *akusala* deeds (mental, verbal and physical) and consciousness of the ultimate goal, the "tendency to proliferation" and all its ramifications in conflict and *dukkha* cannot be brought to an end.

Sakka once again is very appreciative of the Buddha's words and he goes on to ask more specifically about the practice of *bhikkhus*. He wants to know how a monk can acquire the restraint required by the monks' disciplinary code, the *Patimokkha*. The Buddha's reply is similar to the one to the previous question. The good *bhikkhu* pursues only bodily conduct, talking and goals which are conducive to *kusala*, to the attainment of Nibbāna. He rigorously restrains himself from all other actions, other kinds of talk and other aims.

It is interesting to note that the Buddha in both these sections says "*When I observed that*" by following such and such an action or feeling "unwholesome factors increased and wholesome factors decreased" he knew that such an activity "was to be avoided". "*And when I observed that*" by following such a feeling or action the "unwholesome factors decreased and wholesome ones increased, then such bodily action was to be followed". He came to this conclusion, from personal experience. So, he explained: "That is why I make this distinction."[3] The serious student of his teachings has to discover how to do this for himself.

Sakka has one more question in this series about mind training. He wants to know how *bhikkhus* control their senses. Again the Buddha talks of avoiding those things which are conducive to evil while cultivating those which have positive results. But this time it is various kinds of objects - visible, audible, olfactory, gustatory, tangible and mental - which are to be treated this way. This is what restraint of the senses means: discovering what kinds of objects will help take one towards the goal and which pull one down to more suffering. The sight of a Buddha statue would probably be of the former type for someone striving on the Eight Fold Noble Path. A pornographic novel would be conducive to *akusala*.

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> I declare that things perceived by the eye are of two kinds: the kind to be pursued, and the kind to be avoided. The same applies to things perceived by the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind.

Sakka himself rounds out this section of the discourse.

The practical aspect of this *sutta* can be summarised for the modern meditator this way: Always keep the goal of the utter purification of mind before one, do not let mind's old tendencies distract one in opposing directions. This is how to train oneself to put an end to the tendency to proliferation, unsystematic thinking, desires, liking and disliking, and jealousy and avarice. And ultimately all *dukkha*.

Sakka has several more questions he wants clarified by the Buddha, about another matter of concern to him - the huge variety of religious teachers (the "godmen" or "gurus" of those days) he had seen in the world. (This section of the discourse shows the historical precedents and roots of the plethora of sects claiming to offer peace to an unsettled twentieth century). Sakka now genuinely wants to learn (1) if these gurus all teach the same thing and (2) if they are all liberated. The Buddha's reply to both questions is negative. He explains that they do not all teach the same thing because some of them consider one thing the truth and others consider something else to be the truth. None of them will accept any truth other than the concept they cling to as the REAL. It follows from this that they cannot all be fully liberated. The Buddha tells Sakka that only those "who are liberated by the destruction of craving are fully proficient, freed from the bonds, perfect in the holy life, and have perfectly reached the goal". Liberation, freedom from rebirth and *dukkha*, can only be attained by eliminating its causes - craving and ignorance. There is no way to reach the goal other than by understanding suffering and its causes and practising to eliminate the causes. This makes up the Four Noble Truths; not an abstract doctrine but something each individual has to discern for him or herself if he/she is to come out of suffering and reach the goal. Sakka agrees with the Buddha's statement. He remarks that passion (probably referring to *taṅhā* by another name) pulls beings to rebirth in happy or unhappy circumstances.

He then relates to the Buddha how he had previously gone to various human ascetics for advice on these questions with totally unsatisfactory results. In fact, none of the yogis who Sakka hoped to learn from told him anything of value. Once they realised that he was the king of the gods, one and all became his disciples, instead of the other way round which had been his intention. He had to tell them what little Dhamma he understood at the time. There is an amusing irony in this episode. A god went to men he thought must be wise for answers. But, awed by his title, they assumed that the Sakka must know more than they did and would not give him the help he asked for. They asked his advice instead.

Sakka has been delighted with this whole conversation with the Blessed One and says that because of it he is presently experiencing a unique happiness and satisfaction "which is not due to blows and wounds, does conduce to dispassion, detachment, cessation, peace, higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nibbāna." This

is the direction he has longed to work towards. He has at least, with the guidance of the Blessed One, been able to make substantial progress.

The Buddha then asks what thoughts contribute to this great satisfaction. Sakka's final reply amounts to declaring he is full of joy because he will be able to continue purifying his mind in a human birth next and he is sure he will live a Dhamma life to the full and attain final Awakening before many more existences elapse.

Sakka then speaks a verse in praise of the Buddha and expressing his profoundly respectful attitude to him. Part of it goes:

> I've seen the Buddha, and my doubts
> Are all dispelled, my fears are allayed,
> And now to the Enlightened One I pay
> Homage due, to him who's drawn the dart
> Of craving, to the Buddha, peerless Lord,
> Mighty hero, kinsman of the Sun!

Sakka declares the Buddha is the unequalled teacher, unsurpassed in any of the realms of existence. A god from a heavenly plane acclaims the superiority of the Buddha and proclaims his homage to him.

The *sutta* then spells out something that has already been evident - during this dialogue Sakka has become a Stream Enterer, coming to really know that, "Whatever things have an origin must come to cessation." All his uncertainties about the path to final Awakening have been overcome by the Buddha's masterly replies to his questions and by Sakka's own *pāramis* bearing fruit as he applied his quick *deva*-mind to what he was taught.

We too can break out of our bondage to *saṃsāra* and all its misery if we apply ourselves rigorously. Whatever feelings or objects arise in the mind, whatever words we speak or deeds we do, all must be carefully watched so that we only develop those which contribute to the goal of Nibbāna. Anything that helps generate detachment based on understanding the inherent impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and conditioned, non-self, nature of all experience, will take us forward. Whatever breeds greed, or ill will or delusion - of any sort or degree - can only pull us back.

Let us too pay due respect to the incomparable Buddha, teacher of gods and men, who has given us the means to conquer ignorance and craving and so eliminate all forms of suffering forever.

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Rev. Jack Austin receiving his B.A. in Ely Cathedral, 1987

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Reverend Jack Austin - Obituary*

16th July 1917 - 15th August 1993

Born in Caerleon, Gwent, he went to a Cathedral School as a chorister. Here began his interest in cathedral music, architecture, art and history. Went on to one of the ancient grammer schools and boarded with boys from all over the world, starting his interest in other cultures. Became a Roman Catholic on leaving school and worked in a London bank until early retirement. Read *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold, and joined The Buddhist Society, London, towards the end of World War II. Produced a new version of the *Dhammapada* with help from I.B. Horner of the Pali Text Society, which the Buddhist Society published in 1945 and the Society for Promoting Buddhist Knowledge issued in Burma in 1949.

With Dr. Richard Robinson founded the Dharma Group for the study of Mahāyāna Sūtras, and produced duplicated copies of "*The Awakening of Faith*", in D.T. Suzuki's translation, for this group. Called together the first ad hoc Council of The Buddhist Society, of which he was then acting treasurer, in 1946, and remained on it for six years. Resigned from the Council in 1952 for ordination, together with Richard Robinson, by the Venerable Sumangalo, in London. Brought out "*Western Buddhist*" in 1953 to promote Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Initiated in 1954 in Das Buddhistische Haus, Berlin, into the Arya Maitreya Mandala which was founded by Lama Govinda. In 1966 he was initiated into Sōtō Zen by the Patriarch Chisan Kóhó, in London.

Founded, with others, the Hannyakai to practice *Zazen* under proper tuition for the first time in England, and invited Reverend Sochu Suzuki to come over for this purpose. The group has now developed into the London Zen Society. Became a Life Member of the Maha Bodhi Society.

In 1975 became Development Officer of the World Congress of Faiths, founded by Sir Francis Younghusband, and organised conferences and interfaith activities in that connection. Became Treasurer of the Standing Conference on Inter-Faith Dialogue in Education, and served as Buddhist representative on various committees, including the World Conference on Religions and Peace, The United Nations Association Religious Advisory Committee, The Week of Prayer for World Peace, and the Human Rights Network. Became Buddhist Religious Advisor for several bodies, and gave talks on Buddhism to schools, churches and many societies up and down the country.

Contributed to numerous Buddhist and other publications on Buddhism, notably, an early appreciation of Pure Land Buddhism in *The Middle Way* (five parts, 1950-1) and entries to the *Calendar of World Religions* (SHAP Working Party, Penrith - several years), *Animals' Rights* (ed. Paterson and Ryder, Arundel 1979), *Living Faiths* (ed. John Prickett): *Initiation Rites* (Cambridge 1978) and

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teaching, at least in the Theravāda form." It is not quite true, at least outside of Sri Lanka, that all Bhikkhus have to learn it by heart before their ordination - but it might be a good idea if they did!

11. Brough (n. 4), p. 243, suggests that *manomayā* in Dhp 1, 2 might represent a Vijñānavāda point of view ("mind-made"). GDhp and other versions have forms corresponding to Pali *manojavā* "swift as thought", which is not quite parallel with the first two terms and gives a dubious sense. The true reading is uncertain.

MW FEB 1994
VOL 68 #2

OBITUARY

Venerable Songch'ol, An Inspiration for Millions

Ven. Mujin Sunim

Venerable Songch'ol, the Patriarch of the Korean Buddhist Chogye Order, passed away on the 4th November at 7 · 30 am. To this spiritual head of Korea's largest Buddhist Order, some 12,000 monks and nuns and about 15 million lay people have looked for guidence for the past 13 years.

Born in Sanch'ong in Southern Kyongsang-do Province, Songch'ol Sunim was an exceptionally intelligent child. He wrote his first poem at the

age of five and before the age of ten he had mastered all the books of the teachings of Confucius and Mencius as well as other Chinese classics. As an avid learner, he then studied the Buddhist texts.

In 1935, at the age of 24, he left his wife and baby daughter to become a monk under Master Ha Dong-san Sunim at Haein-sa. (Years later he was asked during an interview whether he had felt any regret at leaving his wife and daughter behind. He returned the question with another question, "If there are two things to be had, one that is worth a million dollars and the other worth ten dollars, which would you choose? I chose the million dollar option. For me that is enlightenment." Here is the stanza that he spoke on becoming a monk, which is known as the going forth from home to homelessness.

> The great activities of the vast sky
> Are (a mere) snow flake on a red-hot stove.
> Everything covering the sea
> Is (a mere) drop of dew before the blazing sun.
> Who is it who dies after this brief dream?
> Casting away everything, I walk among eternal truth.[1]

Even before having his head shaved in order to become a monk, while still in the early stages of training, or *haengja* life, his teacher broke all the traditions and allowed Songch'ol Sunim to sit in the meditation hall with the fully ordained monks. This was the first and last time in Korea that such an event took place and it heralded the future of this brilliant, talented leader. It was probable the *Song of Enlightenment* of Master Yung Chia that gave him the final conviction to go to the temple. During the period of meditation, he attained some level of understanding and the monks, impressed by Songch'ol Sunim's attainment, invited him to become a monk.

From the start his life took on a definite pattern. He shunned company, despised name and fame, and never cared for belongings or money. His frugality was legendary. He would scold anyone who wasted anything at all and he himself insisted on the simplest fare. In fact his padded winter coat, covered in patches, had been with him for most of his monk's life. He never went to the city but always stayed in seclusion in the mountains. He had no interest in the things that interest most people: he never cared for owning special objects or meeting famous people, he maintained a simple lifestyle to the end.

After three years of training and study, Songch'ol Sunim took the higher ordination and became a Bhikkhu in 1938. At the same time he took the

1. The three stanzas mentioned in this article, The Going Forth, Enlightenment and Passing Away are enigmatic verses. They are spontaneous utterances which epitomize the moment and are neither logical, nor often comprehensible to the mind. Sometimes they become the object of meditation for his students. For if the constant chatter and logical thinking of the mind is interrupted by being thrown into a state of questioning, then there is a break-through: the True Nature is percieved. After that experience, the meaning of life becomes clear and the person understands things as they truly are.

Bodhisattva Precepts, the training rules during which Buddhists take upon themselves the vow of dedicating their lives to the welfare of others. The following year Songch'ol Sunim attained enlightenment at Tonghwa-sa Temple during the summer retreat. Here is the stanza that he spoke on becoming enlightened.

> The Yangtze River flows westward
> Up to the summit of Mt. Kon-nyun.
> The sun and the moon become dark and the earth sinks.
> I suddenly laugh and turn around,
> As before, the blue mountains are in the white clouds.

The next period of his life was passed in a variety of temples throughout the country until 1947 when Songch'ol Sunim went to Pongam-sa a temple famous for many past masters. There he stayed for four years during which time he worked on the present form of the Chogye Order which was then re-establishing itself after then end of the Japanese colonial rule.

As the Chogye Order's celibate monks began to take over the main temples from the married monks, Songch'ol Sunim was made the first Head Monk of Haein-sa in 1955. It was then that he made apparent his deep-seated dislike of public office and his confirmed conviction to live a life of meditation. He refused to stay at Haein-sa Temple, putting a friend in his place to run the temple and went to stay in Pagye-sa Temple, Sungjon-am Hermitage for ten years. There he sealed the hermitage so that no one could go in or out, only two helpers for supplies when necessary. This was a period of intense practice and though Songch'ol Sunim had always lived an exemplary simple life, during this priod he finalized the form his lifestyle was to take until his death . The hallmarks of this lifestyle were exstream simplicity, withdrawal from society, and constant admonition of all those around him to practice and attain enlightenment.

After this retreat perod, Songch'ol Sunim finally took up residence in Haein-sa. He became the first spiritual leader of Haein-sa Temple when it became a monastery where training , teaching and meditation take place and where there is a special Zen Master. After that, for 100 days, Songch'ol Sunim gave formal teachings every day, a feat that no-one else could match. He remained in Haein-sa until his death.

In 1981, Songch'ol Sunim was elected the 7th Patriarch of the Chogye Order. Famous is the story of his refusing to attend the inauguration ceremony! The message that he gave on that occasion was the vision of the enlightened person, "Mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers..." This then became a famous saying in connection with Songch'ol Sunim. It is linked to the fundamental Zen idea that there is "Nothing Special" and it has deep repercussions on our understanding of reality, enabling us to see things as they truly are. In 1991, Songch'ol Sunim was re-elected and became the eighth Patriarch.

Over the years, Songch'ol Sunim had become very famous for his unique character and lifestyle. First of all he was an undying supporter of *Tono-to-su*, Sudden Enlightenment/Sudden Cultivation School. He followed in the footsteps of the great Sixth Patriarch of the Chinese Ch'an School, Hui-neng, and in fact, Songch'ol Sunim maintained that the main book that everyone should read is the Platform Sutra which is attributed to Master Hui-neng. Following in the tradition of the Platform Sutra, Songch'ol Sunim's main teaching consisted in constantly urging people to practice and to realise their True Nature, *kyonsong*. In this, his teachings differed from the up till then popular teachings of the 12th century Pojo Chinul who promoted the theory of Sudden Enlightenment/Gradual Cultivation. It was Songch'ol Sunim who was the first to disagree with this view and to oppose it.

The academic bent which was characteristic of Songch'ol Sunim's early life, continued throughout. He was learned in five languages and kept informed about developments in science and psychology. Those close to him say that he never forgot anything that he read or saw. There is a story that once a well known monk visited Songch'ol Sunim and showed him a book that he was having difficulty understanding. Songch'ol Sunim had never seen the book before and he flipped through it in a couple of seconds. The monk then asked for help and even though Songch'ol Sunim had only run through the pages in a matter of seconds, he could explain the contents of each page to the monk.

He was particularly well known for making anyone who wanted to see him do 3,000 prostrations. Often misunderstood, this custom had a very sound basis. First of all, it helps the person to know humility. Secondly, it clears out the mind, making it ready for instruction. Thirdly, it makes the person value the experience and understand the importance of practicing and living his or her life properly.

Offering teachings as varied as the people he taught, Songch'ol Sunim insisted, "The Buddha did not teach in order to save people. He taught us in order that we realise we are already saved." He saw the world holistically, "Lao Tzu and Confucius are shaking hands, the Buddha and Jesus are walking together, and songs of peace flow in all directions. The noble and the evil have disappeared, and there is no trace of heaven and hell. 'Amen' is being chanted in magnificent temples, while "Ohm" flows out from splendid churches. In such a world arguments of 'black and 'white,' 'right' and 'wrong'are unimaginable. The Great Wall of China is but toy foam..." Elsewhere he taught us, "The world is a single home, and all mankind is one. Forget such useless discriminations as 'self'and 'others,' and forget national, racial and other barriers. Treat those of other religions as members of your own, and those of other nations as compatriots." As far as daily life was concerned, his approach was simple, "Every day is a good day, every year is a good year."

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Songch'ol Sunim had grown old and was troubled by a bad heart. He knew he was about to pass away and so he called all his disciples and his daughter, Bul-pil Sunim, to his side. He informed them that it was time for him to die. Bul-pil Sunim requested that he stay longer because so many people needed to learn from him. He calmly informed her that it was time for him to go and he spoke his final words.

> All our lives we fool the crowds of men and women
> Thus heaping up karma as high as Mt. Sumeru.
> We then fall into hell alive, full of regret and suffer
> innumerable hardships.
> One wheel spits out red and the red hangs on the blue
> mountain.

As soon as the news of his death had been made known, thousands and thousands of people made their way to Haein-sa Temple to pay final respects to their revered leader. The funeral was held on Wednesday, 10th November 1993.

May all sentient beings attain enlightenment!

The "Suicide" Problem in the Pāli Canon

by Martin G. Wiltshire

This paper is addressed to the subject of "suicide" within the Pāli Canon. The topic of suicide has been chosen not only for its intrinsic factual and historical interest but because it spotlights certain key issues in the field of Buddhist ethics and doctrine. In particular, our investigations into this phenomenon may be seen to have a bearing on the doctrinal issue of the individual's relationship to his own "body" in Buddhism and on the ethical matter of the relationship between the individual and society as a whole. We should, perhaps, point out that suicide first presented itself to us as an intriguing subject of inquiry when we discovered that it appeared to be regarded equivocally within the Canon, that it was both censored and condoned. It was the attempt to explain and resolve this apparent anomaly which resulted in this paper.

One cannot say that the theme of suicide forms a major item of interest or dogmatic concern in the Canon, but it does occur sufficiently for us to arrive at some definitive statement on the subject and its ramifications. Material relating to it we have divided into three basic categories: i) regulations on the subject contained within the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. These purportedly arise out of an incident of "mass" or multiple suicide within the ranks of the saṅgha; ii) a short disquisition occurring within the *Pāyāsi Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* and commenting on the "moral" side of the issue; and iii) anecdotal passages of which a handful are scattered throughout the remaining *Nikāyas;* these describe cases of individual suicide and the circumstances of their occurrence. We shall, therefore, examine the material in the order we have listed it. But, before we do this, we wish to set the context with a few words about the concept of "suicide" in

terms of the religion and culture of the Indian sub-continent generally.

Quite evidently suicide takes on an altogether different complexion in India than the West—let us say, the Semitic and secular traditions—if only because they possess contrasting conceptions of post-mortem existence. In the West each person is allotted only one existence or life-chance, and this either ends in total annihilation (according to "secularism") or, alternatively, determines our fate for the remainder of eternity. In India, on the other hand, the ending of a person's life is merely the preview to entry upon another, itself subject to much the same kind of rules and conditions, and so on *ad infinitum*. We are not as concerned with the accuracy of these generalisations, however, as with the differing impacts these conceptions have on the religious outlooks of the people concerned. Stated simply, these are as follows: religious transcendence in the one case is conceived in terms of revivification or resurrection of the individual with a transformed body and in a transformed world where existence is thought of as a kind of indefinite finitude. In India, on the other hand, since Vedic times the belief in transmigration has meant that we are already part of the indefinite finitude continuum and, as a result, "transcendence" comes to represent the very contrary of that notion: the "ultimate" salvific goal is therefore depicted as the dissolution of individuality and as an absorption to the principle of absolute stillness or quiescence. The Indian standpoint, then, could be said to start precisely where the Western leaves off, and the overlooking of this basic difference in premises has unfortunately led to many misunderstandings when making cross-cultural comparisons and evaluations. In practical terms, the Indian system means that our "individuality" is not just *an* obstacle or impediment to religious consummation but *the* essential barrier, whilst the conception of "individuality" itself is basically defined in terms of "bodily existence and its parameters. Therefore Indian religious paths (mārga)—viz., jñāna, bhakti, karma—are devised specifically for the shedding of individuality, and this involves the formulation of theoretical and practical manuals and techniques (yoga) directed at the "body" as a corporate entity.

Underlying the denial of individuality is, of course, the principle and practice of asceticism and ascetic behaviour. The

many varieties and modes of asceticism found in India are themselves a reflection of the divergent interpretations placed upon this basic religious premise regarding the individual and his body. To mention just a few: Jainism, for instance, represents the most extreme interpretation, where individuality is seen as literally synonymous with corporeal existence and, therefore, the body has to be physically subdued and quelled in its functions right up to and including the moment of death. Jainism prescribes "slow suicide" as part of its higher level of teaching and is operating perfectly consistently with its basic premises in so doing.[1] For death is as much a property of the body as any of those properties we normally identify with it, such as mobility and the sense operations; therefore, it too must be admitted and faced. Here, we may mention a distinction which is relevant to our discussion of Buddhism at a later point: to kill oneself by a direct, singular act—sudden suicide—interrupts the natural sequence of bodily processes and is therefore construed as a deed of *hiṁsā* against one's own person; this is outlawed by Jainism, which seeks to interfere as little as possible in the natural processes. On the other hand, to allow oneself to die slowly, by fasting over a period of years in accordance with carefully laid-out ordinances, is to create the opportunity to watch and monitor one's own death and thereby master and transcend it.

Buddhism's ascetic stance represents a subtle variation of Jainism, mirroring the fact that historically it is probably its younger cousin. Here also the body is the prime "enemy," as it were, but the concept "body"[2] receives a less literal and materialistic denotation: though having form (*nāma-rūpa*), it is essentially a creation and outgrowth of the mind (*viññāṇa*).[3] Consequently, the clue to its dissolution as a vehicle of individuality lies with the mind (manas) ridding itself first of the conception of individuality (re. *anattā*: no self). More will be said about this later.

For a third illustration we might choose the Sāṁkhya-Yoga system, as exemplified within the philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Although this scripture is syncretist in its aims, and allows for a range of salvific paths (mārga), one of its main pronouncements is that individual interests should be subordinated to higher "dharmic" duty, and that if such duty requires one

to take others' lives or forfeit one's own life in the attempt, as it does in Arjuna's case, then one should do so readily. In this philosophy we see once again that the transcendence of the individual and his body is the governing principle, yet this time it is expressed in terms of a subduing and subordination at a *social* level primarily, not by regimenting the body conceived as a physiological or as a psychological mechanism, as in Jainism and Buddhism respectively. The *Bhagavad Gītā*'s ethical philosophy, of course, derives its inspiration from the Sāṁkhya metaphysic of the absolute distinction between body (*śarīra*) and soul (ātman/*jīva*)[4]: because it is infinite the soul remains unaffected by the destruction and destructability of the body — it cannot die[5]. Although there is no reference to suicide in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, so far as we can tell, it is not difficult to work out a view on that particular issue (as on many issues) consistent with its overall philosophy. Firstly, suicide would be regarded as socially irresponsible unless it were laid down as one's dharmic duty (there are circumstances in which this might be conceivable, e.g., as part of a mass protest) and, secondly, it would be considered vacuous, because taking one's own life is simply a matter of taking it up again in another existence, owing to the continuity of the soul—a futile gesture.

This brings us to consider what Hindu dharma actually is on the subject. As in all social communities, suicide seems to receive official disapproval for the simple reason that any incidence of the phenomenon signifies that there is something seriously wrong with the social fabric. But we must be careful to observe the distinction, already alluded to, between sudden and slow suicide. The first is socially disruptive, since its very suddenness creates a "surprise" effect on society. The second kind comprises a specialized form of longer term behaviour which can, for this very reason, be tolerated by a society. This latter can in due course be accommodated by society by being dubbed "religious austerities" and made subject to certain hierarchical stipulations. This, in fact, is the way orthodox Brahmanism handles the problem of the potentially socially disruptive force of religious renunciation. By the time of śāstra compilation (circa 2nd cent. B.C.[6]), Brahmanism had succeeded in rationalizing renunciation within its own religious system and thereby alleviated any threat it posed to its hold on social power. Re-

nunciation was essentially emasculated, by virtue of being confined to the "twice-born," and reserved for the third and fourth stages (*āśramas*) of life, when a person's economic value in society had considerably dwindled. "Religious," or slow suicide, as an aspect of ascetic austerities, formed a component of renunciation, and was therefore subject to the same restrictions. Accordingly, Manu permits this course of action for the twice-born *vanaprastha:* "Let him walk, fully determined and going straight on, in a north-easterly direction, subsisting on water and air, until his body sinks to rest" (VI. 31).[7] Still, evidence suggests that suicide in its conventional social form was severely stigmatised.[8]

It is difficult to avoid seeing a close connection between the phenomenon of renunciation, which is a principle hallmark of Indian religion in post-Vedic times, and the relatively widespread practice of religious suicide. In short, the principle of renunciation begins with disaffiliation with social phenomena—attributable in Indian history, perhaps, to the alienation experienced by the indigenous people on being subjugated by the Āryans in the early part of the first millenium B.C.—and, carried through to its logical conclusion, culminates with disaffiliation from *all* phenomena, including one's individual self and its corporeal form.

So, having attempted to show how religious suicide can form part of the logic of Indian religion, we shall now see how it relates to the specific tradition of Buddhism.

Before we can consider the actual texts, we should first draw attention to the all-important question of motivation: one can take one's own life for selfish or self-centered reasons, or one can voluntarily surrender one's life in an act of self-sacrifice for the welfare of others. The former might be described as tantamount to suicide proper and the latter as martyrdom, except that by martyrdom is not always meant a voluntary act, and it usually revolves as well around confessional disputes. The distinction between self-centered and altruistic motives becomes an increasingly key factor in determining the direction in which Buddhism was to develop after its initial establishment. We can trace an evolving pattern away from one and towards the other: the oldest form of the tradition comprised the *paccekabuddhas,* forerunners of the Buddha, who epitomised the self-interested ascetic[9]; then, in the story of the Buddha's initial hesitation to teach[10], the break with the *paccekabuddha* tradition is symbolised; and towards the end of his life he postpones his *parinibbāna* until he has fulfilled all his teaching responsibilities[11]; next, we have the emergence of Jātaka legends illustrating altruistic virtues—the most precious and cherished of which is the tale of Prince Vessantara, who relinquishes his own wife and children[12]; finally, the supreme act of self-sacrifice becomes part of Buddhism's ethical values—the proto-Mahāyāna legend from the *Jātakamāla* and elsewhere,[13] in which the bodhisattva gives his own body as provender to save a tigress and her cubs from starvation. This particular literary episode, perhaps, marks the point where voluntary, altruistically-motivated suicide is given an official stamp of approval within Buddhism, for subsequently a strong tradition of this practice has existed, right up to and including the self-immolations of the recent Vietnam war.[14]

Thus, we see that "voluntary" suicide does not rank as any kind of issue for early Buddhism since it has not yet entered into its field of vision. This leaves us with the matter of purely self-interested motives.

In the Pāli Canon, there is mention of just one crisis relating to the practice of suicide within the saṅgha, a sufficient crisis to warrant a Vinaya regulation on the matter. The particular incident in question is both mentioned by hearsay (M.III.269; S.IV.62) and narrated in some detail (S.V. 320ff; Vin.III.68ff). It is said that a number of bhikkhus developed the "meditation on the unlovely" (*asubha-bhāvanā*) in accordance with the Buddha's instructions and became so disgusted with their own bodies (*kāya*) in the process that they all committed suicide. When the Buddha discovered what had happened he framed an alternative strategy and recommended to other bhikkhus the meditatin on breathing (*ānāpānasati samādhi*). It is left somewhat unclear as to whether the latter meditation was intended by the Buddha altogether to replace the former or whether it was just to act as an antidote. From its description as conducing to peace (*santam*) and a sense of well-being (*sukho vihāro*) the latter at least seems to have been intended.[15] The Vinaya then proceeds to condemn, not suicide per se, but any act or form of conduct which may be construed as inciting or

assisting another to commit suicide (op cit. III.71,73) and prescribes expulsion from the Order (*pārājika*) as punishment for the offence. The reason why suicide itself is not pronounced upon concerns, we think, a technical point: suicide cannot be adjudged an offense by the saṅgha because the person is no longer living and so cannot come under its jurisdiction. Quite what ordinance would apply to a case of a failed-suicide member of the saṅgha, we don't know; but perhaps this actual circumstance was not envisaged, since the Buddha had, after all, taken precautionary measures to discourage attempts at suicide, by readjusting his teaching, while a bhikkhu had readily available the means to dispatch his own life should he be sufficiently determined to do so. The Canon mentions poisoning, hanging (Vin. III. 72), cutting one's throat (the bhikkhu's few possessions included a razor [*khura*] or scissor implement [*satthaka*]) and throwing oneself off a high place as the most conventional methods of suicide.[16] The case of the monks who meditated on unloveliness is illuminating because it illustrates that the roots of Buddhism still lay within the religious austerities practiced by the Śramaṇa tradition and that, from time to time, there were lapses or retreats into ascetic behaviour, going counter to the spirit of the middle way.

The Vinaya proscriptions against inciting others to suicide are principally directed at a practice, which seemed to have arisen among some bhikkhus, of encouraging buddhist laymen (*upāsakas*) to commit suicide on the grounds that they would the sooner enjoy the pleasures of heaven earned by their good *kamma*. This particular offense was known as to "praise the beauty of death" (*maraṇavaṇṇaṃ saṃvaṇṇeti*) or "to speak praise of death" (*maraṇe vaṇṇaṃ bhaṇati*—V.III.73). Considerable gravity attached to it because it concerned relations between the saṅgha and the laity.

We now come to consider the passage in the *Pāyāsi Sutta* (D.II.330–32). This is the only passage in the *Sutta Piṭaka* in which the subject of suicide is considered in the abstract, and even then obliquely, as part of a wider argument aimed at refuting a heretical opinion about life after death. The sutta is about a dialogue between a certain chieftain called Pāyāsi and the Buddha's disciple Mahā-Kassapa. Pāyāsi expresses the view that there is no after-life and hence that deeds performed in

this life can have no consequences beyond death. Otherwise, he maintains in defense of his belief, good people would seek premature death by suicide in order to reap the benefit of their good deeds immediately. Evidently, he was unaware that this did sometimes happen, as we have just seen, if we can safely rely on the Vinaya testimony. Mahā-Kassapa attempts to demolish Pāyāsi's argument by resort to the following illustration: an expectant mother is anxious to discover the gender of the child in her womb because it bears upon her own rights to inheritance; in her desperation to know, she cuts open the womb, inadvertently killing herself and the child. The point of this illustration ostensibly is to show that prudentially-motivated suicide proves entirely counter-productive and stems from a basic misunderstanding about the real nature of the facts. Mahā-Kassapa expands his point by comparing spirituality to a ripening fruit: if it is plucked before its time then it will simply die and not mature at all. But Mahā-Kassapa adds a further reason why seeking premature death should be considered wrong. He maintains that the object of living is not just to promote one's own spiritual welfare but others' as well; one has an obligation to others to remain in this body. This last assertion of Mahā-Kassapa's is quite resounding, for it is one of the few occasions in the Canon where lip-service is expressly paid to altruistic action.

The main interest of this paper, however, focuses upon the anecdotal cases of individuals, which we shall now examine. They stand out from the other material because they represent instances of suicide which, if not condoned, are certainly exonerated. We aim to find out exactly why this should be so. We have located three stories which are indubitable suicide cases. They concern the bhikkhus named Vakkali (S.III.119; cf. also Thag.350-4; Dh.A.IV.117; Vism.129), Godhika (S.I.120) and Chaṇṇa (M.III.263; S.IV.55), each of whom takes his own life with a knife. There are other stories as well, which share the same basic theme and structural pattern, but which do not make it entirely explicit at the end whether the protagonist puts an end to his own life or dies of natural causes. Owing to their fundamental resemblance to the indubitable suicide stories, we shall treat these as relevant to the issue. The problem of decipherment is partly created by the Pāli locution *katakāla* (lit.,

"making an end") which is used both for death by natural causes and for suicide; unless the context makes an explicit reference to "using the knife" (*satthaṃ āharatilsatthāharakaṃ*) or some equivalent expression,[17] then the precise manner of death is left unclear. The stories which belong in this category are those of the bhikkhu Assaji (S.III.124) — this story succeeds Vakkali's in the *Saṃyutta* text and shares the same format, apart from not mentioning his death; it was probably thought superfluous to mention this, as the primary object of these suttas is to convey doctrine on the *khandhas* (see fn.19) — and of the two *upāsakas* Anāthapiṇḍika (M.III.258; S.V.380) and Dīghāvu (S.V.344).

Apart from representing putative cases of suicide, these stories share one further overriding theme (with one possible exception we shall consider in a moment): each of the protagonists is suffering from a serious degenerative illness. Consequently, they seek the respite of death as a way of release from their acute sufferings. In this respect, their motivation and the circumstances of their demise differs from those of the bhikkhus whom we have seen commit suicide as a form of emotional revulsion against living, or those motivated by desire for quick access to heavenly delights, or the Jains, with their long-term, studied suicide. In fact, they are cases which might be categorized as examples of self-administered euthanasia. So, when we try to understand why they are exonerated, it is initially necessary to appreciate that their act is not gratuitously performed, but constrained by force of circumstance.

Since all these suicides are prima facie examples of persons seeking alleviation of pain of physical illness, it is important to understand that canonical Buddhism did acknowledge the existence and legitimacy of certain standard traditional remedial treatments for illness. In other words, it is made quite plain, in the context of the stories, that recognized conventional treatments had been and were being used to alleviate the ailment, but that they had a limited value in these particular instances. If this were not made plain, then exonerating these suicides might have the effect of opening the floodgates for people to take their own lives on the pretext of slighter complaints. We shall, therefore, examine for a moment those treatments which the Canon recognizes as counteracting physical illness and its resulting pain.

Firstly, there is the conventional treatment using medicines and nursing care.[18] This has the capacity to arrest, allay and possibly cure the illness. But it should be stressed that it is not a complete panacea, because it cannot alter the fundamental law of impermanence (*anicca*), which inheres in all things. There is in the Pāli Canon the recognition that man has no control over events in the external world per se, because they are without self (*anattā*), and this includes his own body (*kāya*) as composed of the *khandhas* (e.g. S.III.3f et seq). What he does have control over, however, is his own attitude towards these external (and internal) phenomena.[19]

This brings us to the two remaining methods of treatment, which are specifically Buddhistic. Through the activity of samādhi one can for a time withdraw from sense-objects, the senses and their operations (the 18 *dhātu*) and so experience temporary respite by attenuating or eliminating sensation (*vedanā*). But this is not a method of cure. In this respect, it may be compared, perhaps, with drug-therapy, without the detrimental side-effects drugs so often have. Failure to achieve samādhi and allay pain forms the theme of the story of bhikkhu Assaji. His illness has debilitated him so much that he can no longer summon the energy to achieve samādhi. He is consoled by the Buddha, who teaches him of the impermanence of all sensations, mental and physical, painful and pleasurable (S.III.126). Having gone beyond the stage where the pain can be arrested, Assaji is left with the one remaining consolation: the knowledge of spiritual truth. A similar case but at a more developed stage is that of Godhika, who is a *sāvaka-bhikkhu* (S.I.121).[20] He finds it impossible to sustain "mind-release through samādhi" (*cetovimuttiṃ samādhikaṃ*): he is reported to have attained it and fallen away six times. His plight leads him to commit suicide, yet he is posthumously declared an arahant by the Buddha. Of all the suicide cases we are examining, this one is the most problematic, for there is no mention in the text of what precise external phenomenon prevented him from sustaining his mind-release, and there is no other case in the Canon of this type of complaint with which we could compare it. The Comy maintains that it was a physical sickness that affected him and adds that he attained arahantship after cutting his throat (S.A.I.144). We may infer from this that the actual dying process had the effect of removing the particular feature inhibiting his release (*vi-*

mutti). It so happens that in the other bhikkhu suicide cases, those of Channa and Vakkali, it is also made quite clear that they too were not arahants until the event of their death, after which the Buddha pronounces them *parinibbuta*. This, we think, goes to show that Buddhism by no means constitutes a simple dualist philosophy between "matter" and "spirit." It seems to demonstrate that there are circumstances in which material conditions can intrude upon "spiritual" factors, on the one hand and, on the other hand, that spiritual development can only sometimes take place when external constraints or inhibitors are first removed. Similarly, there are occasions when "spiritual" forces can have a causal effect on the external world, as we shall see shortly in the case of Anāthapiṇḍika. To return to the story of Godhika. His is the most amusing of the cases—if we can talk about amusement in this context—since the main purpose of the story is to illustrate the ousting of Māra. Māra gets very excited at the prospect that Godhika will commit suicide. He thinks that, as Godhika is only a *sekha* (trainee), he will acrue bad *kamma* (*pāpa*) from his act and fall into Māra's hands (literally *qua* death and metaphorically *qua* apotheosis of evil). Convinced that the Buddha can do nothing to save Godhika, Māra, with his tongue in cheek, taunts the Buddha and urges him to "dissuade" (*nisedha*-S.I.121) his disciple from committing the fatal act. But the Buddha already knows that Godhika is about to become an arahant. After Godhika's expiry, Māra searches for his *viññāṇa*—a sure sign that one is still within the wheel of rebirth. But he is unable to trace it, because Godhika is *parinibbuta;* so Mara slinks sulkily away. The whole episode would seem to indicate that suicide is salvifically fatal in most cases, but not for the arahant, since he cannot be motivated by *taṅhā* (S.I.121). This is a clear sign that acts are evaluated on their determining motives and not on their surface appearance.

The third method of combatting physical pain, according to the Canon, is to reflect upon (*samanupassati*) the Buddha's teaching (dhamma). Presumably, this takes away the mental anguish associated with physical pain, as this is the purpose of his teaching. In the case of the layman, Anāthapiṇḍika, however, it also relieves the physical pain[21]: his reflection upon right knowledge (*sammā-ñāṇa*) and right release (*sammā-vimutti*) results in immediate (*ṭhāṇa*) subsidence (*paṭipassambhati*) of his pain. This account would at the same time seem to be describing his transition to *sotāpanna* status, since he is classified by the Buddha as such after his death.

In each of these suicide cases (with the exception of Godhika, who is a *sāvaka* already) the person anticipating his own death receives systematic instruction on dhamma, either from the Buddha or one of his disciples, such as Sariputta. We suggest that such instruction takes place for the following reasons: Firstly, to serve as an antidote to their suffering, as we have just seen. Secondly, in order to ensure that they have a proper grasp of doctrine respective to each individual's own level of spiritual development. It is noteworthy that instruction follows a catechising procedure: a series of questions intended to elicit the right answers. The content of the teaching invariably concerns the doctrines of impermanence (*anicca*) or no-self (*anattā*) or both. Why these particular doctrines? Not only do they represent the consummation of the Buddha's teaching but they also have a special relevance to the person about to encounter his own death. The precise relevance can be gleaned from a passage occurring in the Channa story, in which the Buddha states that "whoever lays down this body (*kāya*) and grasps after (*upādiyati*) another body, is to be blamed (*sa-upavajja*)." (M.III.266; S.IV.59), which means that his (suicidal) act carries bad kammic consequences. Therefore, we can surmise that the instruction that the body *qua* the *khandhas* is impermanent and without self helps to counteract any tendency to grasp after a new body. The concept of body (*kāya*), here means not just the idea of taking up a new corporeal form but all the attendant features of its senses and the hold they exert over the individual. Since the suicide act is technically the last deed an agent performs, the spirit in which it is performed is absolutely crucial. Already, within the Canon itself, the last mental image before death is said to play a critical part in determining the nature of rebirth for those who are reborn (cf.M.III.103).

Death itself is always a key event in the round of rebirth, as it is the point of transition from one body to another. Nevertheless, death in itself is not a deed, and can carry no kammic consequence of itself; it is simply the turn-style or customs area through which the traveller passes on his journey from one

existence to another. This point is made clear in a sutta from the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (S.V.369–70): A devoted lay-disciple, Mahānāma, asks the Buddha what would happen to him if he met an untimely death, like a sudden accident of being run-over or crushed during a procession (this illustration has an uncanny resemblance to our contemporary car accident). Would it make any difference to his posthumous destiny? The Buddha assures him that he has nothing to fear in such an eventuality, provided that his mind (*citta*) is practiced in the dhamma, since the body's (*rūpa-kāya*) very nature is mortality but the mind (*citta*) is quite distinct and separate. To illustrate his point, the Buddha compares the mind and body to a clay pot and the oil in it: when cast into a deep pool of water, the pot breaks up and disappears, but the oil rises up to the surface.

Thus, death as a physical event has no special significance of its own. It merely provides corroboration of the empirical truth that all created things must come to an end. Establishing this point helps us to appreciate why it is that suicide per se need not be a blameworthy act. The body is merely the receptacle or bearer of the *citta*, and is composed of disposable material, with its own form of built-in obsolescence. This does not mean to say that one should dispose of it before its time, for that is to betray a misunderstanding of its proper purpose, which is to allow for one's own spiritual development and to assist others—as the *Pāyāsi Sutta* avers. But, should the body reach that condition or point at which it can no longer perform these functions—as in the case of an incurable malady or illness—then death becomes little more than *de jure* confirmation of a *de facto* situation. The key issue is not the dying but the motivation accompanying the dying.

Finding out whether a person whose death is imminent is fitted for the event comprises the third reason for instruction being given. Here, instruction provides an opportunity to find out whether the person has any negative kammic residue (*apāpika*) which can be absolved by confession. There is a set procedure followed in these stories: the Buddha questions the person with the words: "have you any anxiety (*kukkuccaṃ*) or remorse (*vippaṭisāra*)?" and "have you anything to blame (*upavādati*) yourself with in regard to morals (*sīla*)?" The bhikkhu Channa, for one, has no confession to make, claiming that he

has nothing to reproach himself for, since when he was healthy he had always served the Buddha eagerly (*mānapena*-M.III.264). In his service of the Buddha, he therefore seems to have fulfilled the requirement, of assisting others, laid down in the *Pāyāsi Sutta*. Vakkali, on the other hand, does have something to confess. He tells the Buddha that one remaining "anxiety" and "remorse" dominated him before the Buddha came to visit him: a longing to see the Buddha face to face. In the context of his reply, the Buddha is supposed to have made one of his most famous utterances: "He who sees the dhamma sees me, and he who sees me sees the dhamma" (S.III.120). A third example is the bhikkhu Assaji, who confesses that his own failure to realize samādhi has become to him a source of personal anxiety (S.III.124). The terms "anxiety" (*kukkuccaṃ*), "remorse" (*vippaṭisāra*), and "moral blame" (*upavājja*) together represent the notion of a "bad conscience," and to die with a bad conscience is kammically lethal. But the individuals, in these cases we have cited, either have been or are absolved of any traces of bad conscience or unfulfilled opportunities, and can therefore confront the experience of death unafraid (*abhaya*). We notice that they are vindicated: firstly, by the verbal confirmation of the Buddha, who pronounces them "blameless" (*anupavājja*); and secondly by the manner of their destiny: the three bhikkhus become *parinibbuta*, and the *upāsakas*, Anāthapiṇḍika and Dīghāvu, become, respectively, a deva in the Tusita heaven (*qua sotāpanna*) and an *opapātika* (*qua anāgamin*).

Let us briefly summarise the main findings of this paper. Suicide need not necessarily be regarded as wrongful in Buddhism, since the body is prospectively dead anyway. We have seen that this was over-literally interpreted by certain zealous monks, however, who took their own lives as a result of dwelling too much on the principle of unloveliness (*asubba*); unwittingly they transgressed against the spirit of the middle way. The wrongfulness or not of the matter turns—as ever in Buddhism—on the question of motivation and circumstance: if the motivation is grasping (*upādana*) or craving (*taṇhā*) after a new milieu of existence, as in the case of the Buddhist laymen who longed for an early realisation of heavenly delights, then the act proves counter-productive. But if this body has lost its essential usefulness—and Buddhism seems to recognise that such cir-

cumstances do sometimes exist—then the body can be relinquished; provided, that is, it is understood that all bodies are intrinsically impermanent and bankrupt of self and that, consequently, no body one may inhabit will be implicitly different from the present one. Buddhism therefore is not coterminous with stoical behavior, but recognises that there are conditions and situations too oppressive to be endured.

We should like to close on two features which have, for us, proved the most fruitful and thought-provoking results of this enquiry. Firstly, the canonical material provides evidence that there existed in early Buddhism a rudimentary form of catechism and confessional procedure for those, as it were, on their death-beds. This anticipates the later pre-mortem rites that have become such a pronounced feature of Buddhist belief and practice. Secondly, we may remind ourselves that one of the arguments invoked against suicide is the "altruistic" case: existence within the body is for the welfare of others as well as for oneself. Let us make a note of the fact that this outward-looking value judgment occurs within the setting of Pāli Buddhism.

NOTES

1. The doctrine of suicide in Jainism is treated in the *Āyāra-aṅga* and the second (*Āurapachchakkhāna*) and fourth (*Samthāra*) *Painna*. The legends of slow-suicides by Jain tīrthaṃkaras and others are related in the *Kappa Sutta* (Parśva & Ariṣṭanemi), the *Bhagavatā Sutta* (Khandaga the monk) and the *Ovavāiya Sutta* (Ambada the layman). An analysis of the texts has recently been performed by Colette Caillat, "Fasting unto Death according to the Jaina Tradition," *Acta Orientalia*, vol. XXXIII, 1977. pp. 43–66.

2. *Kāya* is the Pāli word for "body" in its most general and fundamental sense. It is a term of central soteriological importance in the sense that it is the name for the five *khandhas* or constituents of individuality taken collectively. All *khandhas* are subject to the "three marks" (*ti-lakkhana*) of existence and this explains why the body (*kāya*) is viewed as inherently bereft or bankrupt, as we try to show in this paper. Other Pāli words sometimes translated "body" are: *rūpa*, denoting the physical, corporeal body as distinct from the mental (*nāma*) factors also included in the concept of *kāya;* hence we have *rūpa-kāya. Sarīra* is the word for body mainly in the context of corpses and of relic-worship. *Deha* is a term with an allied meaning to *sarīra*, but used less in Pāli than Sanskrit.

3. The relationship of *nāma-rūpa* and *viññāṇa* is discussed comprehensively in *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism*, R. Johansson (Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series No. 37. 1979). He states: "*Viñ-*

ñāṇa may become conscious of body through stimulation but it also creates body through *mano* or *saññā* . . . . These *viññāṇa*-processes create a new material person. This is possible, because conscious processes and corresponding material processes are only different aspects of the same reality" (p. 33). In further support of Johansson's point we may cite S.III.152: "the uninstructed person creates and continues to create the body" (*assutavā puthujjano rūpaññeva abhinibbattento abhinibbatteti*).

4. See, for instance, *Bhg. G.* XIII.31, XV.7.

5. "It is not killed when the body is killed" (*na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*)—op.cit. II. 20; "this embodied being is in anyone's body beyond killing" (*dehī nityam avadhyo 'yam dehe sarvasya*)—II.30.

6. P. Kane *A History of Dharmaśāstra*, vol. I p. 8.

7. S.B.E. vol. XXV. p. 204. This particular ascetic rite, known as *mahāprasthāna* (the great departure), is also alluded to in the *Jābala Up.* (5) and the *Āpastamba* (II.9.23). Maybe S.V.361 is a reference to it as well.
Cite H. Cakraborti, *Asceticism in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1973. p. 77.

8. The earliest-known interdiction against suicide occurs in the *Ṛg Veda:* "One desiring heaven should not die before the appointed span of life is at its end" (*na purāyuṣah svaḥkāmi preyāditi*)—. A verse from the *White Yajurveda* (*Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*, 40.3) which refers to those who "kill the self" is, I think, erroneously construed by Cakraborti (op. cit., p. 77) to mean straightforward suicide. It is plain from the context that "self" is here referring to "Ātman," the soteriological objective (cf. also I.B. Horner's comment, *Book of Discipline* pt. 1, p. 117, fn. 3). Traditionally, in Hindu culture, a person's suicide has a polluting effect on relatives and other householders, rendering them impure (Gautama, XIV.12); at the same time self-inflicted death is recognised as a legitimate kind of punishment for certain crimes (see *Āpastamba Dharma*, S.I.9.25). The one renowned exception to the interdiction placed on suicide in Indian culture is, of course, the custom of *satī* (widow-burning). This custom appears to have a very specific socio-economic purpose, relating predominantly to the kṣatriyas in the Hindu community. It ensured, for example, that others could not usurp the rights to property and inheritance by marrying the widows of powerful men. See A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, Fontana edit. 1971, pp. 188–190.

9. For the theory of *paccekabuddhas* as forerunners of Buddhism, see my Doctoral Thesis, "The Origins of the Paccekabuddha Concept," University of Lancaster, 1980.

10. The principal version of the Buddha's hesitation to teach occurs at Vin.I.5ff. See also D.II.36–9, M.I.167–9, S.I.136–38.

11. D.II.112f.

12. J.VI.479ff. See *The Perfect Generosity of Prince Vessantara*, M. Cone and R. Gombrich, Oxford, 1977, for an up-to-date translation of this Jātaka.

13. *Jātakamāla*, ch.I. See also *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra* (trnsl. R. Emmerick, Luzac, 1970) ch.XVIII; *Saddharmapuṇḍarika sūtra* (trnsl. H. Kern, S.B.E. vol. XXI.) ch.XXII.

14. cf. "La mort volontaire par le feu et la tradition Bouddhique Indienne," J. Filliozat, *Journal Asiatique* 1963.

15. We read elsewhere (A.V.108ff) that the Buddha teaches combining the practice of *asubha-bhāvāna* and *ānāpānasati samādhi*, together with other practices, as a form of curative treatment for illness. It is to be noticed that nine out of the ten components of this treatment (see below, n. 20) represent facets of asceticism or world rejection, *ānāpānasati*, situated at the end of the list, comprises the exception. We are therefore prompted to view *ānāpānasati* as the countervailing, balancing factor, judiciously placed alongside the others to inhibit their possible morbidity-promoting effects.

16. Black Rock (*Kāḷasilā*), an aspect of Mount Isigili, Rājagaha, was a place associated with ascetics and ascetical suicide according to the Buddhist scriptures. A special feature of Black Rock was a precipice which formed an ideal place for suicide by casting oneself over. See D.II.116, M.I.92, S.I.120, III.120, Vin.II.76.

17. viz. *attānaṃ jīvitā voropenti* (they deprive themselves of life)—Vin.III 68.

18. Regulations and practices regarding medicine and medical care are the subject of the sixth section of the *Mahāvagga* (Vin.I.199–252).

19. According to the *Khandhavagga* of the *Saṃyutta* (III. 1–188), suffering (*dukkha*) arises because a person identifies or equates his self with the *khandhas*. This identification is described as a process of clinging (*upādana*) and attachment (*rāga*). Emancipation (*vimutti*) begins when a sense of disgust (*nibbinda*) at the body (i.e., *khandhas*) causes the attachment to break down.

20. Another version of the Godhika story appears in the *Dhammapada* Comy. (I.431ff).

21. See also A.V.108ff., where the Buddha is said to claim that the monk Girimānanda's sickness (unstated) will immediately be cured by *hearing* teaching on the ten ideas (*dasasaññā*) of impermanence (*anicca*), no-self (*anattā*), the unlovely (*asubha*), the wretched (*ādīna*), abandonment (*pahāna*), absence of attachment (*virāga*), cessation (*nirodha*), rejection of worldly-pleasure (*sabbaloke anabhirata*), the impermanenece of all constructs (*sabba-saṅkhāresu anicca*) and meditation on breathing (*ānāpānasati*). Elsewhere (S.V.79), Mahākassapa experiences *instant* recovery from an illness when he hears teaching on the seven "limbs of enlightenment" (*bojjhaṅgā*).

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Embracing Bodhicitta

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Tenzin Gyatso
The Fourteenth Dalai Lama

Serialized from A FLASH OF LIGHTNING IN THE DARK OF NIGHT: A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, *by Tenzin Gyatso, The Fourteenth Dalai Lama.* (*Printed by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc.*)

In this chapter, which deals with the generation of *bodhicitta*, Śāntideva begins by rejoicing.

1 Happiness and joy I have
In virtue, which relieves all beings
From the sorrows of the states of grief
And places those who languish in the realms of bliss.

2 And in that wealth of virtue I rejoice,
Which is the cause of the enlightened state;
Exalting in the freedom, never to be lost,
Of living beings from the round of pain.

3 And in the Buddhahood of the Protectors I delight,
And in the stages of the Buddhas' offspring.

4 The attitude of heart, that virtue ocean-vast,
That brings the happiness and benefit
Of all that lives:
Such is my delight and all my joy.

When we rejoice in the good qualities and positive actions of others, we accumulate merit ourselves. By rejoicing in our own positive actions, we increase and strengthen their effect. On the other hand, if we show off the few good qualities that we have and are jealous of those of others, we do not even deserve to be called practising Buddhists. So we should rejoice in all positive actions, whether of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, or ordinary beings.

Next comes the request for the Buddhas to turn the Wheel of Dharma and not to pass into *nirvāṇa*. This is followed by the dedication of merit.

5 I join my hands, therefore, and pray
The Buddhas who reside in every quarter and direction,
To kindle now the light of Dharma
For those who grope bewildered in the gloom of sorrow.

6 I join my hands likewise and pray
To those who have the victory and long to pass
Beyond the reach of sorrow: Do not leave us now in ignorance
Remain among us for unnumbered ages!

7 All these actions I have now performed,
And virtue I have thus amassed —
May all the pain of every living being
Be thereby scattered and destroyed!

Now begins the actual generation of *bodhicitta*, both aspiration and application:

23 Just like those, who in the past have gone to bliss,
Conceived the awakened attitude of mind
And in the precepts of the Bodhisattvas
Step by step abode and trained,

24 Likewise, for the benefit of beings,
I will generate this attitude of mind,
And in those self-same precepts
Step by step I will abide and train.

Aspiration *bodhicitta* is the vow to generate the same intention as the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past. Application is the vow to accomplish, as they did, all the activities of the path to enlightenment, for the sake of all beings.

Today we shall only take the vow of aspiration. To do this, we shall read through the second and third chapters of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* up until the second line of verse twenty-three. Try to concentrate on the meaning and afterward rejoice in what we have done.

In order to take this vow, we should imagine that in front of us are the Buddha and his eight close disciples;[1] the six ornaments,[2] and the two supreme teachers,[3] including Śāntideva; and all the realized masters of the Buddhist tradition, in particular the holders of the Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu, and Nyingma schools of Tibet — in fact, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Consider also that we are surrounded by all the beings in the universe. With this visualization, we shall now read the Seven Branch Prayer.

[1] The eight close disciples are the eight Bodhisattvas: Mañjuśri, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Ākāśagarbha, Kṣitigarbha, Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra.
[2] The six ornaments are: Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asaṇga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, and Dharmakīrti.
[3] The two supreme teachers are Śāntideva and Chandragomin.

18 May I be a guard for those who are protectorless,
A guide for those who journey on the road;
For those who wish to go across the water,
May I be a boat, a raft, a bridge.

19 May I be an Isle for those who yearn for landfall,
And a lamp for those who long for light;
For those who need a resting place, a bed;
For all who need a servant, may I be a slave.

20 May I be the wishing jewel, the vase of plenty,
A word of power, and the supreme remedy.
May I be the trees of miracles,
And for every being, the abundant cow.

21 Like the great earth and the other elements,
Enduring as the sky itself endures,
For the boundless multitude of living beings,
May I be the ground and the vessel of their life.

22 Thus, for every single thing that lives,
In number like the boundless reaches of the sky,
May I be their sustenance and nourishment
Until they pass beyond the bounds of suffering.

These last two lines are very powerful, are they not? The lives of a great many beings depend on the presence of the five elements, so let us think: just like the earth, may I support beings as numerous as the sky is vast. And as long as they have not attained enlightenment, may I devote myself entirely to their happiness. Let us make a heartfelt wish to attain Buddhahood for their sake and vow never to give up this thought. If some of you are not Buddhists or feel that you are not able to keep such a vow, then you need simply think: may all beings be happy. Those of you who wish to take this vow of aspiration, please sit up straight, or kneel on your right knee, and fold your hands. Repeat after me, three times, the lines I am going to read in Tibetan. These are the first two lines of verses twenty-three and twenty-four, preceded by 'Teachers, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, listen!'

I have visualized the Buddha in front of me, and you should consider that I am a sort of messenger or intermediary. Consider that we are surrounded by all the beings in the universe and generate compassion for them. Think of the Buddha and feel great devotion to him. Now, with compassion and devotion, pray, 'May I attain Buddhahood!' and recite:

Teachers, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, listen!
Just as you who in the past have gone to bliss,
Conceived the awakened attitude of mind,
Likewise, for the benefit of beings
I will generate this self-same attitude.

When we recite these lines for the third time, at the words, 'I will generate this self-same attitude,' think that you have generated this *bodhicitta* in the depth of your hearts, in the very marrow of your bones, and that you will never go back on this promise.

Traditionally we now recite the last nine verses of the chapter as a conclusion to taking the vow.

Now that we have taken this vow, we should try to be good human beings in our daily lives. We should not, for example, pretend to be very nice while we are in this tent and start fighting with each other as soon as we get out! We should from now on try to have a positive and kind mind: we are going to be happy in life. I really think that the future depends on the quality of one's mind, on a good mind: So we must try to be good people and be good examples for those around us. The initiative to be like this has to come from each one of us individually.

Thank you all for listening so carefully. I myself try to practise *bodhicitta* in all situations, and I try as much as possible to encourage others to do so, too. I find it is a practice that is entirely without danger and brings tremendous benefit.

[In the next issue of *The Middle Way* we continue this serialization with 'Carefulness']

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A Minimal View of Karma

Cambell Purton
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Concepts of karma seem to be central to how human existence is understood in Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. Here I shall be reflecting as a Buddhist, but even within Buddhism there are many strands of thought and different points of emphasis within that broad notion we call 'karma'. My aim is to suggest a way of understanding the essentials of the karma notion which does justice to what is said in the traditional texts, while not incorporating anything which is at all speculative or beyond the bounds of common sense.

If we take the Four Noble Truths to encapsulate the essence of Buddhism, the first point to note is that they contain no explicit reference to karma. Nevertheless it is not difficult to see that something of the nature of karma is already there at the centre of Buddhist thought. Buddhism starts with the notion of *duḥkha* (unsatisfactoriness), and the aim of Buddhist practice is the elimination of *duḥkha* for all sentient beings. Now this already commits us to the view that Buddhist practice has consequences for the practitioner (it reduces *duḥkha*), and the notion of action-as-having-consequences is central to the karma notion.

'Karma' is of course the Sanskrit word for intentional action, and when the Buddhist texts were translated into Tibetan, the translation chosen for 'karma' was '*las*'(pronounced 'leh'), which is just the ordinary Tibetan word for action or work. ('Karma' is related to Latin '*creare*' and English 'create': so etymologically speaking one could say that our karma is our works, our creations). Yet in the context of Buddhism (and Indian religion generally) it must be acknowledged that the use of the term karma is given a special colour or emphasis. Karma is action seen as having consequences of a desirable or undesirable sort for the person who performed the action. Thus the view arises that if I perform a good (or evil) deed then good (or evil) will in appropriate measure come back to me, either in this life or in some future life. Karma then becomes a sort of 'moral law of cause and effect', something not unlike the notion of divine retribution in Western religion, but operating in a more mechanical way without the intervention of God.

At this point we can easily become involved in rather wild speculations. For example in the (Hindu) Dharmashastra literature[1] there are long lists of the karmic consequences of misdeeds (e.g. a cow-slayer will go blind, a stealer of grain will be reborn as a rat, a 'solitary sweet-eater' will develop

[1] See Ludo Rocher, 'Karma and Rebirth in the Dharmashāstras' in Wendy O'Flaherty (ed.), *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1980).

rheumatism). Similar ideas are found in some Buddhist writings,[2] but the Buddha explicitly criticized this 'causal law' notion of karma: if anyone should say and be correct: 'Just as this man performs an action, just so he will experience the consequence' there would be no pure life and no opportunity would be known for the stopping of suffering.[3] In other words, if karma is simply an aspect of cause and effect, and we are bound into this causal web, there is nothing to be done about *duḥkha*. However, for the Buddha, karma was not a matter of causal mechanisms, but of *cetanā* (intention, volition, will): 'It is *cetanā*, O monks, that I call *kamma*. Having willed, one acts through body, speech or mind.'[4]

Now if karma is simply intention or intentional action, is there anything at all left of the traditional idea that through karma the consequences of our good and evil deeds come back to us? I think there clearly is: if I perform a kind action then one clear consequence is that I become to that extent a kinder person; if I give way to jealousy I become more of a jealous person. Our actions 'have consequences' for our character, not in virtue of any causal mechanisms, but simply in virtue of the essential connections between the concepts of action and character. Character is that aspect of our nature which develops out of our choices and intentional actions, and which disposes us to future choices and intentions. ('Character', as the precipitate of our choices is a very different notion from that of 'personality', which is more the precipitate of what happens to us, and is morally neutral). Of course people may act 'out of character' on particular occasions, and in special circumstances, but there are limits — conceptual limits — to how much this sort of thing is possible. If someone who has been timid begins to act in a consistently brave way (and there are no special circumstances, such as being under the influence of a hypnotist, etc.) then they have become brave; and we assert this not because of any esoteric knowledge we have, but because that is what the concept of 'being brave' amounts to. Hence in this sense it seems undeniable that from good actions good consequences come to us, and from evil actions evil consequences. Alexandra David-Neel drew attention to this sort of view of karma in the Hindu Brahmana of the Hundred Paths: 'they spoke of actions (*karman*); by pure acts man becomes pure, by evil acts he becomes evil.'[5] Such a view, which I will call the 'minimal view', seems to fit at least some of the traditional Buddhist texts. Consider for example:

> Actions arising from lust or hate or delusion ripen wherever an individual selfhood is generated, and wherever those actions ripen, there their offspring are experienced, whether here or on their next appearance or in some life-process beyond that.[6]

> karma operates by itself in the results produced by it. It ripens into the psychosomatic constituents of him who commits the deed and nowhere else.[7]

[2] See e.g. H. Saddhatissa *Facets of Buddhism*. (London: World Buddhist Foundation,1991), pp. 168–75.
[3] Aṅguttara Nikāya I, 249
[4] Alexandra David-Neel, *Buddhism: Its Doctrines and Methods* (London: Unwin Paperbacks,1978), p. 173.
[5] Ibid.

The traditional image of a fruit ripening strongly suggests in itself that karmic maturation should be understood as something that takes place within the lifestream of the person who performs the actions. This is a very different picture from that found, for example, in the Saiva Siddhanta school of Hinduism, where a person's deeds are assessed by God who then provides the appropriate desserts,[8] or (more in accordance with Hindu orthodoxy), where the place of God is taken by some impersonal causal system which automatically ensures that justice is done. (It is hard to say which of these views is more speculative: I have some sympathy for the Shaivites who argued that if the world really is arranged so that everyone always gets just what they deserve, then only an omnipotent and omniscient God could conceivably ensure that things always come out right.)

It may be objected that although the 'minimal view' just outlined expresses something that is true and uncontroversial, this is not all that (and perhaps not at all what) Buddhists have in mind when they speak of karma. It may be said that typical examples of karmic consequence are not things like 'becoming brave' or 'developing a mean streak', but things like 'going blind' or 'losing one's life's savings'. Curiously, karma is often referred to in situations where it seems clear that what has happened is not at all the consequence of a person's actions — the person went blind because of an eye infection. One response to this might be: 'Yes, but they contracted the eye infection because they were, say, blind to someone's suffering in a previous life.' To which the sceptic can reasonably reply: 'People contract eye infections for reasons that have nothing to do with karma; it is a matter of whether a particular micro-organism entered that person's body, how the body's defence system responded, and so on. We know at least the sort of explanation which is appropriate here, and it does not involve in any essential way the victim's intentional actions, or karma.'

Now it might be said that the fact that one sort of explanation can be given for an event does not mean that other sorts of explanation are not also valid. For instance, the fact that my arm moved up because of the firing of certain nerve cells in my brain and muscles, doesn't seem incompatible with the explanation that I raised my arm because I wanted to attract someone's

[6] Aṅguttara Nikāya III, 33
[7] Gampopa, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, trans. H. Guenther (Boston: Shambhala, 1986), p. 81.
[8] See Ninian Smart, 'Classical Hindu Philosophy and Theology' in *The Religious Quest: Hindu Patterns of Liberation* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987), p. 22.

attention. There can, that is, be different levels of explanation associated with different ways of seeing the situation. So the fact that a person's eye infection can be explained in biological terms doesn't rule out the possibility that there can be a further kind of explanation of the situation in terms of karma. Yet this still leaves it very mysterious how the karmic explanation is supposed to work. Granted that a person's blindness could be explicable in more than one way, how exactly does the person's going blind connect with what they did in the past? It would be open to a follower of the Shaiva Siddhanta to say that God ensured that the person got their just desserts, by arranging for a particular micro-organism to enter their body; but this notion of punishment for past offences is different from the notion of karma, and in any case it seems impossible that anyone could know whether this connection between act and consequence existed: it is surely just speculation. In Buddhism, we are asked to 'be a light unto ourselves', which in the present context means that if we are to take karma seriously we must be able to see clearly for ourselves what the karmic consequences of our actions are. For a Buddhist, karma should not be a vague fantasy about the way the universe operates, a fascinating esoteric doctrine, but something that is open to view in one's ordinary everyday experience.

Staying then within what we really know, what can we say about the tragic example of someone losing their sight? How can it be said that this is their karma? I think the key is that karmic consequences are always of an evaluative nature, 'good' or 'bad'. In popular Buddhism a life of worthy action may be seen as leading to rebirth in a noble or rich family, and, crucially, that is seen as a good consequence. On reflection, however, one might well question whether being reborn as a prince or princess is really such a good consequence. If a 'good birth' means a birth in which one will have good opportunities to practise the dharma, then birth in a poor but devout peasant family may be much better. Rebirth in the Royal Family could well be seen as very bad karma! In general, whether the consequences of an action are good or bad depends crucially on the attitude of the person experiencing the consequences. In particular, 'going blind' can be experienced in very different ways, depending on the character and attitude of the person involved. For one it may be an absolute tragedy which leads to life-long bitterness and resentment. To another it may a be a tough challenge with which they would rather not have been faced, but which they are prepared to take on. For a third it may lead to the development of a love of music, a new and unexpected closeness with a partner, and a whole world of experience that would otherwise have remained closed to them. 'Going blind' is not to be understood in purely medical, factual terms; what going blind amounts to depends crucially on the character of the person involved.

Correspondingly, the explanation of 'what has happened' will be different depending on whether we are thinking in medical or in personal terms.

The medical explanation applies to the physiological facts, and does not concern us here. What we are concerned with is the explanation of the 'personal facts', e.g. the fact that when one person goes blind there is bitterness, while when another goes blind there is a deepening love. This sort of explanation surely has to be given in terms of the character of the person involved. One person's character is such that they see the situation as a tragedy, another as an opportunity, a third as a blessing. Although the physical events are the same in each case, what happens to these three people is different, and different things happen to them because of the different ways they are. However, in Buddhism the way we are — in the sense of what our characters are — is up to us. Our characters are formed by our actions; through making the effort to be a bit more honest or brave we become a bit more honest or brave. In Buddhism (and of course in other traditions as well, such as Existentialism in the West) character is not something given, it is something achieved.

Our intentional actions, then, lead to the formation of our character, and our character determines — in an important sense — what happens to us. Our actions don't determine what happens (that usually depends on all sorts of additional factors), but they determine what happens to us, i.e. how we take what happens. But how we take what happens is what is important for us; the mere physical happenings are of only academic interest. For all important human purposes, 'what happens to us' is not certain physical events, but how the events are for us, whether challenging, boring, fulfilling and so on. And in that sense — the only humanly important sense — what happens to us depends on our character, which depends on our past actions.

I would not want to claim that this way of seeing the matter fits all the things that are said of karma in Buddhist writings. But often, at least, the stories that are told in the scriptures can be read in more than one way. I have space for only one brief example: Angulimala sets out on his begging round one morning and has things thrown at him. He is injured, his bowl is broken, and his robe torn. He comes back to the Buddha, who says: 'Bear it, brahmin, bear it.' You have experienced here and now in this life the ripening of deeds whose ripening you might have experienced in hell over many a year, many a century, many a millenium'.[9] One way of reading this involves supposing that the stored consequences of Angulimala's past deeds have somehow triggered the unfortunate events of that morning. The Buddha's remark would then need to be interpreted as meaning something like: 'You had something like this coming to you, and it is just as well to get it over now, since otherwise some nasty things would still await you.' But an alternative reading, which I would recommend, would be: Angulimala has things thrown at him for reasons that have nothing to do with his past deeds. However, he has some choice in how he sees and experiences the morning's

[9] *Majjhima Nikāya*, 86.

events. Perhaps, on approaching the Buddha, he feels anger and resentment; it has been a really bad morning. The Buddha notices his mood, his way of taking the events, and suggests an alternative way of experiencing them. 'Bear it — you are reacting like this because of the way you are; your karma has ripened in the form of this angry, resentful state. Be glad it has ripened now, since otherwise you may not have the opportunity to deal with it for many a year. By that time the attitudes in which it is rooted will probably have become more deeply rooted, and the pain of dealing with them will be that much greater.' In short, what 'happens to' Angulimala should be understood in terms of how it was for him, and that arises from his character, which arises from his past deeds.

This way of putting things seems to me to have the advantages of being fairly obviously true, and of not invoking any speculative karmic mechanisms, while at the same time being a reasonable interpretation of what the texts mean by karma: karma is intentional action, and the ripening of action in character, together with the inevitable consequences for what 'happens to us'. Karma has nothing to do with physical causality, or grand theories about cosmic connections. The doctrine of karma is not designed to answer the ordinary factual question of 'Why did this happen?' but the more poignant personal question of 'Why did *this* have to happen to *me*?'

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King Ajātasattu, The Chinese Dots, and the Date of the Buddha's Enlightenment

Maurice Walshe

In the Buddhist view, the decisive event in history was the Enlightenment of Siddhatta Gotama (in Pali, Siddhārtha Gautama in Sanskrit), whereby the 'Doors to the Deathless' were opened, and it again became possible for human beings, for the first time — it is said — after vast aeons, to gain final release from the weary round of birth-and-death (*saṃsāra*). One would naturally assume that this date (whenever it was) would form the starting point for any Buddhist era. Not so. In 1956-57 the Theravāda Buddhist countries celebrated the year 2500 of the Buddhist era as dating from the Buddha's *parinibbāna* or Final Passing (somewhat improbably supposed to have occurred in 544 or 543 BCE),[1] i.e. 45 years *after* the Enlightenment. This is rather odd, though perhaps no odder than the Christian dating from the *birth* of Jesus (which anyway probably really happened about 4 BCE!), instead of from the Crucifixion — surely the decisive event in Christian history...

Until about a decade ago, most scholars thought they knew the Buddha's dates to within a very few years, the most probable dates (based on Sinhalese chronicles) being either 566-486 or 563-483 BCE.[2] Growing scepticism about the reliability of these sources came to a head with the publication in 1982 of an article by Heinz Bechert, in which he argued for a dating some 115 years later.[3] This initiated a general discussion, and today it seems that most scholars favour a later dating, though there is no unanimity on what this should be. An international symposium has been held on the subject, the results of which, when published, may bring some clarity into the question.

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1. See E. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism* (English transl.), Louvain 1988, 13f.

2. *Ibid.* See also e.g. A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 2nd ed., Delhi 1980, 40.

3. H. Bechert, 'The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered', *Indologica Taurinensia* i (Turin, 1982), 29-36. Two recent views:

   i. 'For a long time scholars favoured either 486 or 483 BCE as the year of Buddha's death, so that the Enlightenment would fall in 531 or 528 BCE. But the consensus now is that for this date too the evidence is flimsy and we really do not know the Buddha's exact dates. It raises fewer problems if he is dated a bit later, so the best we can say is that he was probably enlightened between 550 and 450, more likely later rather than earlier', Richard Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism*, London 1988, 32;

   ii. 'Both scholars [P.H.L. Eggermont in four articles in *Persica*, 1965-79 and H. Bechert (as n. 3)] believe the Sinhalese chroniclers are wrong, and date the Buddha about 115 years later. Their arguments are noteworthy, but need to be further developed before they can be regarded as providing final proof, and yielding an acceptable alternative to the previously accepted chronology. Accordingly, I do not (yet) accept them', H.W. Schumann, *The Historical Buddha* (English transl.), London 1989, xii.

   The cautious tone of both these statements is noticeable.

Meanwhile, some arguments can certainly still be put forward in favour of the older dating.

The trouble with the ancient Indians, in contrast to many other early peoples, is that they were not very interested in chronology. Thus there is little doubt, for instance, that the first Greek Olympiad took place in 776 BCE, or the fall of Nineveh in 612 BCE, but we do not know the absolute regnal years of Kings Bimbisāra and Ajātasattu of Magadha, contemporaries of the Buddha. If we did, there would be no problem. Nevertheless, it so happens that King Ajātasattu (Skt. Ajātaśatru) can perhaps after all help us in a more indirect way. We must therefore make a slight detour. The question of the relationship between Buddhism and those ancient wisdom-texts, the *Upaniṣads*, has been much disputed. Here we are only concerned with chronology. The dating of the oldest of these is vague: some say the earliest go back to 700 or even 800 BCE, though the late Professor Lal Mani Joshi strongly disputed the idea that they were pre-Buddhist.[4] Now it is precisely in the very early *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* that we read of 'King Ajātaśatru of Kāśī (i.e. Vārāṇasī or Benares)', who is portrayed as a wise ruler with philosophical interests, who corrects the mistaken views of a learned Brahmin. We know nothing else about this ruler, and his historicity is dubious, to say the least.

Let us now turn to the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, the second discourse of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. We can agree with Pande[5] that it belongs to an early stratum of the Pali Canon. It is believable as the highly stylised account of a real event, which must have occurred during the last eight years of the Buddha's life, these being the years of overlap between the Buddha's life and the reign of Ajātasattu. The 'story-line' of the sutta is not lacking in drama, though there is some confusion (probably more apparent than real) about the psychological motivation. It opens with a moonlight scene. The king is sitting with his ministers on the roof of his palace 'on the fifteenth-day fast-day, the full-moon of the fourth month, called Komudī', and he says, 'Delightful, friends, is this moonlit night! Charming is this moonlit night! Beautiful is this moonlit night! Lovely is this moonlit night! Auspicious (*lakkhaññā*) is this moonlit night! Can we not tonight visit some ascetic or Brahmin, to visit whom would bring peace to our heart?' It should be noted that there is no serious evidence here of any real 'philosophical interest' on the king's part, as suggested by Pande. One might perhaps for a moment be tempted to think of some kind of 'romantic discontent' on the king's part, but this would surely be anachronistic as well as out of keeping with the king's character. He feels that the night is not only 'delightful' and so on, but also *auspicious*. This night may therefore bring him the chance to regain his peace of mind. Though the more specific reason for this is not precisely spelt out here, it is not far to seek. The king's mood is consistent with a bad conscience at having killed his father in order to gain the throne, a crime for which he expresses his repentance to the Buddha at the

4. Lal Mani Joshi *Discerning the Buddha*, Delhi 1983, 49-51.

5. G.C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, 3rd ed., Delhi 1983, 83.

end of the sutta.[6] According to the commentary, Ajātasattu was unable to sleep from the time of the crime until his meeting with the Buddha. While this comment is not implausible, it could also be a rationalisation of the king's moonlight vigil. If there is anything in it, it would tend to date the episode soon after Ajātasattu's accession, i.e. about 494 or 491 BCE according to the hitherto accepted chronology.

In response to these words, six different ministers recommend six different teachers as being possibly capable of bringing peace to the king's heart. They are the amoralist Pūraṇa Kassapa, the determinist Makkhalī Gosāla, the materialist Ajita Kesakambalī, the categorialist Pakudha Kaccāyana, the Nigaṇṭha (i.e. Jain) Nātaputta (generally known today as Mahāvīra), and the sceptic Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta. The king, it appears, has already consulted all of these without gaining any satisfaction, and refuses to see any of them again. Finally Jīvaka, the court physician (who is also physician to the Sangha) persuades King Ajātasattu to visit 'the ascetic Gotama' whom, we may well suppose, in view of past events, he has hitherto not ventured to approach.

King Ajātasattu certainly subscribed to the conventional view that support of 'ascetics and Brahmins' would lead, in the next life, to a heavenly reward. In other words, for him as for so many people throughout the ages, 'piety' was a form of insurance. Incidentally, though this attitude unquestionably enabled many charlatans to make a good living out of the credulous, it was after all a small price for society to pay to ensure the survival of genuine religious teachers of all schools. The king could see well enough how the pursuit of various secular avocations (which he enumerated) led to appropriate rewards and satisfactions in this life. But what rewards did the practice of the 'holy life' of renunciation bring in this very life (as opposed to the next)? This was surely, from his point of view, not some abstract 'philosophical' problem, but quite a sensible question, a genuine puzzle — as indeed it is for us, too — in regard to some of those concerned, such as Ajita Kesakambalī, who did not believe in a future life.

In any case, of the six 'ascetics and Brahmins' the king had consulted, not one had apparently even attempted to answer his simple question, while the last one, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta, had doubtless made the royal head spin with his flat refusal to adopt *any* standpoint. Concerning him, the King said to the Buddha: 'Of all these ascetics and Brahmins, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhaputta is the most stupid and confused'. This reads very like a genuine royal comment, but we should beware of taking it at its face-value. Actually, contrary to the king's opinion, Sañjaya was perhaps in reality the cleverest of them all. It would do him too much honour to compare him with Nāgārjuna, but his scepticism

6. See *Dīgha Nikāya*, Suttas 2, 16. For fuller information about Ajātasattu, see the relevant articles in G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, 2 vols., London 1938 (rep. 1974) and *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* i, Colombo 1961. (N.B. Though this work has been stuck in the letter *C* for many years, the parts which *have* appeared are, as far as they go, very valuable and should not be overlooked). Since we are concerned here with Ajātasattu's psychology, it should be noted that the Buddha's words (DN 2, 102/D i, 86) *hatāyaṃ bhikkhave rājā, upahatāyaṃ bhikkhave rājā* were mistranslated by Rhys Davis (*Dialogues of the Buddha* i, 95) as 'This king, brethren, was deeply affected, he was touched in heart'. The real meaning is 'The king is done for, his fate is sealed, monks!' (owing to his crime of parricide).

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The Arahant and Bodhisattva

by Michael Mettam

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PART 2

In examining the ideals of the Arahant and the Bodhisattva within their own traditions — the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna — we gather a great deal by looking first at the social background and history of the times.

Early period: sixth century BC.

During the Buddha's lifetime (commonly accepted dates 563 BC. to 483 BC.) we find an enterprising and non-conformist culture in the north-east of India — roughly the area of the Ganges valley. The inhabitants of this region were to some extent removed from the ritual-and-priestbound practices which the mixed descendants of the Indo-Aryans were involved in further to the north-west. People in the more easterly area were disposed to question ultimate meanings in religion and philosophy, in which they took a vigorous interest. The sixth century BC, was a period in which the Jains, the Ājīvikas (or Determinists), the Buddhists and other non-conformist groups flourished in this area. Brahmin thinkers inspired by the Vedas and the Upanishads — whose composition took place largely in the western region — also approached free-thinking teachers to learn the inner significance of the outward forms they had been indoctrinated in.[1] The extent to which the ordinary populace were interested in listening to and questioning thinkers who had an interpretation of life to unfold is illustrated by many incidents in the scriptures of these various groups. In the early Buddhist scriptures, for instance, it is common for travellers meeting in rest-houses on the road to exchange ideas on the nature of existence. On one recorded occasion, the King of Magadha, dining on the terrace roof of his palace, surrounded by courtiers, and uttering verses to the beauty of the moonlight, found it natural to conclude by saying 'Who is the recluse or brahmin whom we may call upon tonight . . . who will be able to satisfy our hearts?' (D.I.47). There is another typical and delightful story in the Therīgāthā (XLVI). A female philosopher named Bhaddā had planted her challenge (a rose-apple bough) to debate outside the gates of Sāvatthi under the watch of a group of children. Returning after her business inside the city was over, she found that a passing sage had expressed his willingness to debate by asking the children to throw down the bough. Immediately Bhaddā thought 'an unsupported debate is not effective' and returning into Sāvatthi she walked from street to street inviting people to attend the discussion, and came back to the gates 'with a great following'. Her opponent turned out to be the Venerable Sāriputta, who after answering the points she made, seems to have floored her with the question 'One — what is that?'[2] Bhaddā was converted by listening to the Dhamma,

1. D.I.235. Tevijja Sutta

2. Possible meanings for the question are discussed in the footnote to the Pāli Text Society's English translation of the Therīgāthā, though nothing further is said about it in the text or Commentary. It was obviously a question of some depth since the Venerable Sāriputta goes on to say: 'If you don't even know what the One is, how can you understand anything else?'

and eventually became a Buddhist nun.

An interesting aspect of the mental climate of this area of the Ganges valley was the way in which seekers after truth and their teachers lived. It was a way of life which had already existed in India from earlier times, and it became very prominent in this region now. These seekers maintained their independence and also found the seclusion necessary for meditation and reflection by living in the open air, 'the homeless life', away from the bustle, fighting, kinship ties, tribal or feudal obligations, the growing urban luxury — with its feasting, gambling, theatrical shows and so forth — and also the struggle for livelihood of the settled area. They moved between towns and villages, living on uncultivated land, or in the forest edges. The economic basis for this form of life lay in a unique feature of the Indian character. Indians admire the religious quest, and are prepared to support it. Elsewhere, this willingness to support 'religieux' is often found among followers of a specific church or religious faith, but in India the searcher for spiritual truth was esteemed for him or herself, regardless of affiliation. This is a characteristic which exists among Indians (especially in rural areas) even today, and it seems to have taken root very early indeed among those spiritually gifted people. The recipients of this charitable bounty in the 6th/5th centuries BC. were known as 'wanderers'.[3] Because their economic support depended on their leading lives of considerable virtue and asceticism (which are the outward and visible signs of holiness in the eyes of an Indian peasant), there were, on the whole, very high standards of effort and austerity among these open-air philosophers. They were not all religious seekers, nor were they all solitary hermits. Schools were beginning to grow up around certain teachers, and, as we have seen, the habit of debate. But the expectations which the wanderers had to live up to meant that even the schools of Sceptics and Materialists — who did not believe in an after-life, or the carry-over of retribution or reward — were constrained, for the most part, to an austere and irreproachable life-style. Support for the itinerant philosophers did not come only from the village. Local monarchs, the tribal nobility, propertied people and townsfolk generally, shared in this attitude of esteem. Gradually, wealthy families became perpetual patrons of teachers or schools who aroused their particular respect, and this trend continued later (particularly in Buddhism) when a settled monastic system developed, which inevitably lost some of the freshness and accessibility of the earlier way of life. In the sixth century BC., however, the wandering life was in full force, and the pursuit of understanding was a widespread interest. It was in these times, and among such people that the Buddha was born.

In this paper we shall look at the concepts of the Arahant and the Bodhisattva from the point of view of Hīnayāna Buddhism.[4] Later, in Part III, we look at the elaboration and development of the idea of the Bodhisattva in the Mahāyāna. The only remaining living school of the Hīnayāna today is the

3. The Pāli word for a wanderer, recluse or religious mendicant is *Samaṇa (Skt. Śramaṇa)*.

4. The term Hīnayāna is used, not in a pejorative sense, but as a neutral designation meaning 'not Mahāyāna'.

Theravāda, and it is their version of the teachings of the historical Buddha — in the Pāli canon — from which we now quote. To a large extent a single thread of teaching unites all schools of Buddhism, and later developments can be seen arising out of earlier understandings. As far as the human heart and human religious needs are concerned, late and early probably complement each other. In order to appreciate complementariness, however, we need also to look at differences.

First, therefore, we look at the idea of the Bodhisatta (which is the Pāli term). In the suttas, or 'Discourses', of the Pāli canon, the Buddha's name for himself, before he became the Enlightened One, was *bodhisatta*, which means, approximately, 'being who is destined for Buddhahood'. The passages which refer to the Bodhistta in the Pāli suttas have a quality about them which is unmistakably different from the descriptions of the Bodhisattvas in later Buddhist literature.[5] The sutta passages are plainly rooted in the human dimension. In describing his own early struggles and difficulties, the Buddha (as he is reported in the suttas) identifies himself with problems which his later followers also experience. Here is an example. The Buddha is replying to a listener who had expressed doubts about living in the forest:

> 'That is so, that is so, Brahman. When I was still the *bodhisatta*, I too thought, "remote lodgings in the forest are hard to put up with" ... When I was staying there, Brahman, either an animal came along, or a peacock broke off a twig, or the wind rustled in the fallen leaves. And I thought, "surely this is fear and dread coming upon me." And then I thought, "Why am I staying here, longing for nothing but fear? Suppose now, that whatever posture I may be in as that fear comes upon me, I should hold still in that posture until I have driven out that fear and dread ..."'
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> M.I.17-21

As the sutta continues we see the Bodhisatta reflecting that it is the corruptions of the heart that make a being susceptible to imaginary fears, and that it takes a clear, discriminating and loving heart to develop real courage. This example, and many like it, indicates the practical, empirical tone of the Buddha's teaching in the early texts. He would not just mention certain states of mind as skilful or unskilful, but give precise and testable instruction on how to develop or dissolve them. In another sutta[6] we see the Buddha — 'before awakening, while I was yet the *bodhisatta*' — pondering the problem of raising the quality of the thoughts (*vitakkā*) that flow through the mind. He noted that when he remarked the flow of thought with 'clear comprehension', unskilful thoughts would subside, and skilful thoughts increase. Again, as *bodhisatta*, he observed from direct experience that when the mind (*citat*) is depressed, overstrained or disturbed, it is necessary for it to be restored by the

5. The Pāli canon of the Ti-Piṭaka was not closed until the reign of Asoka, two centuries after the Buddha's death, and even there later material has crept in. There are references to earlier Buddhas, and a tendency towards inflation — but these are presented in the third person, and can without difficulty be put down to the interpolations of the devout. Passages where the Buddha speaks in the first person are simpler in tone.

6. M.I.114f.

7. M.I.116; M.I.91f; A.II.23; A.V.3.

energising effects of happiness (*sukha*), and he also observed that the strongest experience of happiness is produced by *samādhi*, or meditative absorption, which animates and irradiates the *citta* with joy and tranquillity. Later, the Buddha was to declare:[8] 'the understanding of the four noble truths is won, not with sorrow and woe, but with joy and gladness.'

In the references to the *bodhisatta* in the early canon, we have a picture of the Buddha setting forth on the route which he later mapped out for his disciples. Thus, the Enlightenment does not appear as a flash of superhuman brilliance, marvellous, but inexplicable to the rest of us, but as the culmination of a human struggle for understanding, of which we have a huge, confused, broken up and priceless record in the early scriptures. The Buddha was the path-finder, but he makes it clear that as regards enlightenment (*sambodhi*) he was not different from other Arahants — perfected ones. The fulfilment of Arahantship, which is 'knowledge and vision'[9] accompanied by 'unshakable deliverance of the heart',[10] is applied by the Buddha to himself in the same terms as it is applied to others. He summons people with the serene assurance:

> 'Let an intelligent person come to me, sincere, honest and straightfoward, and I shall instruct him and teach him *dhamma* so that, faring along as instructed, it will not be long before he will himself know, and himself see.'
>
> M.II.44.

In order to appreciate the principle of Arahantship as the early scriptures present it — and as distinct from the later, Mahāyāna, attitude to the Arahant ideal — we need to consider particularly three concepts in the teaching. These are:

Compassion
Dhamma
Nibbāna

Compassion

It is axiomatic in the suttas that whilst the *citta* of an individual undergoes training, that person will also be mindful of the needs of other people. At every turn of the training, the disciple is reminded that while he is following the path for transmuting the fires of greed, hate and delusion, he will also, by example and companionship, be leading 'another to a state that is for his profit and happiness for a long time'. (A.I.194). There is the case of the bhikkhu Meghiya (Udāna 34) for example, who, after being requested by the Buddha to wait, nevertheless insisted on going off in solitude, and then was shocked to find that his *citta* revealed itself to him as lustful, malicious and cruel. He returned to expostulate about this to the Buddha, remarking that he had taken up the homeless life out of faith, and nevertheless this had happened to him. The Buddha remarked that the immature heart needs companionship, and that friends and companions should talk to each other,

8. A.V.441.

9. Knowledge and vision: *ñāṇa-dassana*. M.I.197; D.I.84; M.I.167.

10. Unshakable deliverance of the heart: *akuppā-cetovimutti*. refs. as in note 9.

and attend discourses and teaching sessions. We may remember that in the famous poem, Sutta Nipāta 35, the virtue of going off alone 'like a rhinoceros' applies only when a zealous companion is not to be found. This is not to suggest that solitary effort is never recommended in the suttas. It is only exclusive self-regard that is condemned.

> The Blessed One at Kosambī:
> 'Just as a cow with a young calf, while she is pulling the grass keeps an eye on the calf — even so, monks, it is truly fitting for a man endowed with (right) view that he should look out for those manifold things that are to be done for his fellows on the path'.
>
> M.I.324.

Two groups of words regarding two distinct and different functions of compassion occur in the early suttas. On the one hand we have *karuṇā*, which is used of a meditation that aims at the interior cultivation of compassion within the heart. When this is truly achieved it is a very high state indeed (it is one of the Brahmavihāras), and although striven for by any Buddhist, it is only operative as a positive force when it emanates from the clear *citta* of an enlightened being, whether Buddha or Arahant. In the circumstances of daily life, however, the virtue of simple out-going compassion is regarded as an essential human sentiment, which can be greatly developed both by training and by active use. The word which is most frequently employed in the suttas for simple compassion is *anukampā*[11]. In the 'Greater Discourse on Emptiness', the Buddha describes his role towards his disciples with the words:

> 'The teacher teaches *dhamma* to his disciples out of compassion (*anukampā*) ... And so, Ānanda, I will speak, constantly reproving, constantly cleansing. That which is the pith will stand fast.'
>
> M.III.117-8.

Among many examples of this valuable severity there is the occasion when the venerable Ānanda is rebuked for having stood by in silence whilst an obstinate monk named Udāyin, who had not understood the teaching, contradicted and goaded the Arahant Sāriputta, who had by then reached old age. On hearing about this incident, the Buddha said:

> 'Is it possible, Ānanda, that you can look on in indifference at an elder monk being vexed? Compassion[12] does not grow from [such indifference].'
>
> A.III.194.

There are also the more formal occasions, as in the well-known passage in which the Buddha sends his disciples out, with the words:

> 'Go walking round, bhikkhus, for the welfare of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion (*anukampā*) for the world ...'
>
> S.I.105.

11. Other words are *kāruñña* (not to be confused with *karuṇā*), and *anuddayā*, which also indicate simple compassion, or sympathy. On the subject of compassion in the Hīnayāna, I am much indebted to an interesting study entitled 'Love and Sympathy in Theravada Buddhism' by Harvey B. Aronson, 1980.

12. *kāruñña*.

Later, the Buddha reminded his monks to watch the impulses of their hearts when they were giving a talk on Dhamma, and to refrain from speaking if they caught themselves thinking: 'Oh! that they may come and listen to my teaching, and be pleased with it, and tell me so.' They were to teach only when inspired by 'the fair order of the Dhamma itself . . . and out of pity, caring and compassion for others'.[13]

Some of the most transcendent utterances in the suttas are set in scenes of such simplicity and realism that they spring out at us with the force of an actual eye-witness account. On one such occasion, the Buddha had been asked by bhikkhus to pay a visit, out of compassion (*anukampā*) to the dying Vakkali. The sick man, on seeing his teacher approaching, made an attempt to rise and greet him, at which:

> 'The Blessed One said "Rest easy, Vakkali. Do not stir upon your bed. There are these seats at hand, I will sit here".'

After some converse, Vakkali explained that he had been longing to set eyes upon the Blessed One again, but had not had the strength to come and see him, at which the Buddha said:

> '"Hush, Vakkali. What is there in seeing this vile body of mine? *Who sees the Dhamma sees me: who sees me, sees the Dhamma.*"'
>
> S.III.121

Dhamma

Deflecting their centre of interest from himself to the Dhamma is characteristic of the Buddha of the suttas. Dhamma, in Buddhist scripture, is in one sense the teaching, but it is also the immortal spiritual principle which exists 'beyond all worlds'. It pre-exists the Buddha, whose role was to discover, understand,[14] and then to teach it. It is described in the suttas as being 'outside time'.[15] The great formula runs as follows:

> 'The Dhamma, proclaimed by the Blessed One, visible here and now, timeless, inviting all to come and see, leading onward, to be understood by the wise as a personal experience'.
>
> D.II.93.

In the world in which we live, the ordinary, everyday world of sense experience, Dhamma is expressed in the principle that righteousness and order uphold the universe, both in the organisation of physical nature, and in the working of the moral law. It is significant that the words *dhamma, dharma*, and in English, rightness and righteousness, are linked etymologically with an ancient Indian word, *ṛita*,[16] which indicates cosmic order and moral justice. This is 'the nature of things', *dhammatā*. It is the order of this world.[17]

13. S.II.199. the terms are *kāruñña, anuddayā, anukampā*.

14. Discovering or knowing Dhamma involves immediate insight and contact, such as we usually express by the verb 'to see', as in Sutta Nipāta 788: 'I see the pure and the transcendent, without defect. By seeing is man's salvation.'

15. *akālika*.

16. *ṛita* occurs in the earliest of the Vedic hymns, the Rig Veda.

17. 'This world' applies both to the heart of man and the manifold worlds of *saṁsāra*. Disorder, disharmony and injustice are held to be evened out by the operation of *kamma*.

Also part of the nature of things is the higher, or spiritual order, which can be apprehended by the purified *citta*, which then acquires 'understanding of the higher; insight into Dhamma'.[18] Full insight into the nature of Dhamma only comes at the end of the path, but the first genuine contact with Dhamma often arises out of discontent with the imperfect state of things that we experience in the world of human affairs, and the intuitive conviction that our experience could be better. This contact is sometimes called *saddhā*,[19] faith, or more exactly, a hopeful trust based on growing experience of the teaching. The desire to follow Dhamma (*dhamma-chanda*)[20] now determines the course of life for that being. After submitting to the training of the heart[21] which is set out in such astonishing detail, variety and depth in the early suttas, it is related in the scriptures that the *citta* attains a new understanding, an awakening; it penetrates the underlying meaning of things[22] and knows that it is finally liberated from darkening impulses.[23] This is the experience of enlightenment, *sambodhi*.

It is said of the Dhamma, in the suttas, that it evokes service. The Buddha, after his enlightenment, reflected that 'a man suffers if he lives paying no one the honour and obedience due to a superior', and he then resolved:

> 'This Dhamma, then, wherein I am supremely enlightened, let me dwell, honouring, reverencing, obeying and serving this Dhamma.'
>
> A.II.20.

To serve Dhamma requires that it should be revealed to others since Dhamma is the principle of salvation. The Buddha therefore exhorted his disciples to make the path known to others by teaching and example, and if they had not yet reached 'supreme enlightenment'[24] but were following the path of Dhamma, they would teach 'that of which they themselves were sure'.

Nibbāna

Nibbāna is presented in the suttas as the state of mind which follows on enlightenment in living persons. It denotes a reality of a different order from all other experiences of the *citta*. It is the transcendence[25] towards which the Dhamma flows, and it is described in the same striking phrase as that which describes Dhamma:

> '*Nibbāna* — visible in this life, outside time, inviting all to come and see, leading onwards, to be understood by the wise as a personal experience.'
>
> A.I.158.

18. *adhipaññā-dhammavipassanā*. A.V.104.

19. S.II.30-31.

20. M.I.480.

21. *citta-bhāvanā*: A.I.10.

22. *yathābhutaṁ-ñāṇadassana. A.IV.99.*

23. vigatūpakkilese D.I.83; *āsavānaṃ Khayā* D.I.156.

24. *uttama sambodhi* A.II.14; *sambodhiṃ anutturaṃ* It.28, A.II.201.

25. The Pāli word for the transcendent is *lokuttara*, which means 'beyond all worlds' (including the highest heavens). A distinctly different word is *paralokā*, which refers to 'worlds beyond', i.e. other worlds of re-birth within *saṁsāra*.

It is important to note that in the early canon, the early Ti-Piṭaka, an individual is never referred to as 'entering *nibbāna*' at death. The words used when the Buddha[26] or an Arahant[27] dies is *parinibutto*, which means 'set free (from evil)', 'cooled'. But *parinibbuto*, likewise, is used more frequently of the enlightenment of living persons.[28] (The word *nirvāna* (which is the same word in its Sanskrit form) acquired a very different emphasis in Mahāyāna scripture, where it is applied largely to the after-death state.) An important corollary of the fact that *nibbāna* is characteristic of living minds (of the Enlightened Ones — the Buddha and Arahants) is that when it is necessary for the mind, the *citta*, to withdraw from the transcendent state in order to carry out the duties of normal life, it can do so. The Venerable Sāriputta was questioned about this, and he replied in his usual forthright manner:

> 'There are two conditions, your reverence, for emerging from the freedom of mind that is signless: paying attention to signs, and not paying attention to the signless realm.'[29]
>
> M.I.297.

Bearing in mind that it is a state of the *citta* which is experienced in this life, we may look at some further descriptions of *nibbāna* in the suttas. It follows on the dissolution in the freed mind — the *vimutta citta* — of the fires of lust, hatred and delusion, and of the deep obsessions (*āsavā*). It follows on the understanding of the four noble truths;[33] it proclaims how things really are.[34] In a famous description at Udāna 80, which is specifically related to *nibbāna*, it is 'the unborn, the not-become, the uncreated, the uncompounded'. A constantly recurring metaphor is that of light. Light is part of the refrain which is twelve times repeated in the Buddha's first sermon:

> 'There arose in me vision, insight, understanding: there arose in me wisdom, there arose in me light (*aloko*).'
>
> S.V.422.

It is said in the Dīgha Nikāya that when consciousnes of everyday phenomena is held in check, and the *citta* enters the unconditioned, it 'shines with a radiance that knows no bounds'.[35] In this luminosity the lesser lights of sun, moon and stars cannot shine, and darkness is swallowed up.[36]

Now we come to a problem which lies at the heart of the schism between the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism. It is a surprising fact that *nibbāna*, which in the Pāli scriptures is understanding of 'how things are', freedom from bondage and compulsion,[37] the total abdication of self,[28] and boundless compassion,[39] is interpreted by the Mahāyāna sūtras as a state of compulsion, narrow-mindedness and selfishness from which, it seems to

26. D.II.56.
27. M.III.128; S.IV.63.
28. M.I.45; M.I.235; M.I.251.
29. Signless: *animitta*.
30. *pāraṁ*: S.IV.369.
31. *paññā-pāripūriṁ* D.I.195.
32. *santaṁ* A.V.322.
33. *saccaṁ* S.IV.369.
34. *yathābhūtaṁ vacanaṁ* S.IV.195.
35. *viññāṇaṁ anantaṁ sabbato paham*: D.I.233.
36. Udāna 9.
37. M.I.167.
38. *suññatā cetovimutti*: M.I.297.
39. *appamāṇā cetovimutti*: M.I.297.

them, the enlightened Arahant can never be freed, except by turning to the Mahāyāna. Leaving aside historical disputes, some of which were examined in the first part of this study, there is a particular passage in the early canon which, wrongly interpreted, can even now give rise to this misapprehension. In a rare reference to the after-death state in the suttas, the Buddha is recorded as saying that, after enlightenment and the attaining of *nibbāna* in this life, he would not be 're-born in these conditions',[40] and nor would those who followed in his path and who also achieved full enlightenment.[41] One such reference occurs in the sutta known as 'The Ariyan Quest'. Somewhat abridged, it runs as follows:

> 'And I too, monks ... while I was still the *bodhisatta*, not fully awakened, being myself liable to birth, sought what was likewise liable to birth ... ageing, ... disease ... death ... sorrow ... stain ... Then, monks, after a time ...'
>
> The Buddha then outlines his long seeking, and concludes with the words:
>
> 'So I, monks, being myself liable to birth, seeing the peril in what is liable to birth, seeking the unborn, the uttermost security from bonds — *nibbāna* — won the unborn, the uttermost security from bonds — *nibbāna* ... won the unageing, the undecaying, the deathless, the unsorrowing, the stainless, the uttermost security from bonds — *nibbāna*.
> Knowledge and vision arose in me, [and I knew,]
> Unshakable is freedom for me,
> This is the last birth,
> There is not now again-becoming'.
>
> M.I.163-167.

A similar statement, in slightly different words, is found in other discourses of the Buddha when he is speaking of the enlightenment of those who train in Dhamma. Then:

> 'He knows: birth is at an end,
> The holy life has been lived,
> Done is what had to be done,
> There will be no more of [becoming in] these conditions.'[42]
>
> D.I.84.

These passages came to be seen by Mahāyānists as a selfish decision on the part of the Arahants to enjoy the bliss of *nirvāna* after death to all eternity (or else to be extinguished in it). *Nirvāna*, in Mahāyānists eyes, began to take on more and more the nature of a geographical location from which it would be impossible to return to share the burdens of sorrowing humanity: this was the dreaded 'compulsive' aspect of *nirvāna*. Finally, a teaching which could encourage Arahants to behave in this way came to be regarded by Mahayanists as a 'lesser teaching' for inferior mortals.

But, to followers of the Theravāda Hīnayāna school, the statement in the Pāli canon that 'there will be no more becoming in these conditions' for the Enlightened Ones after death, refers to the conditions of normal human

40. *na-aparaṁ itthattāyā*.
41. *anuttara sambodhi*: of Arahants, A.II.201.
42. See note 40.

birth: that is to say, birth in ignorance and corruption of mind (*kilesa*). This is birth as we have all experienced it, and as the historical Buddha, according to the suttas, said that he had experienced it too.[43] Certainly there are palliating factors: the world is shot through with Dhamma, the *citta* has an immeasurable potential, compassion abounds, spiritual influences are everywhere. Human birth is opportunity. But, until it is stabilised in Dhamma the *citta* is on a see-saw between Dhamma and *kilesa*. It can find no sure footing, either for itself or for its companions, for:

> 'It cannot be, Cunda, that one who is sunk in mud can pull out another who is sunk in mud.'
>
> M.I.45.

The turning-point of enlightenment (*sambodhi*), and the abiding state of enlightenment (*nibbāna*), produce, during life, conditions within the *citta* that are irreversible. After that, ignorance, corruption and the illusion of selfhood cannot return. After that, the enlightened *citta* can indeed help its fellows to find the same stability:

> 'But this situation occurs, Cunda, when one not sunk in mud can pull out another who is sunk in mud.'
>
> M.I.45.

After death, what happens to the *citta* of the Enlightened One, the Arahant, and what then is its relation to its fellows? In the first place, it is specifically denied in the early scriptures that the Arahant is extinguished at death.[44] But we meet a difficulty here, for while it is incorrect, according to the suttas, to think of *nibbāna* after death as extinction, it is equally mistaken to think of it as existence. The verbs which mean 'to exist, to be'[45] in Pāli and Sanskrit, also mean to change, to grow, to decay and so forth. This is existence, as we know it in the sensual world. The Venerable Sāriputta explains to a monk named Koṭṭhita:

> 'To hold, friend, that the Tathāgata exists (*hoti*) or does not exist (*na hoti*) after death, is to view the Tathāgata as body (and the other *khandhas*).'[46]
>
> S.IV.385

The Buddha adds to this. To the wanderer Vacchagotta, who had asked 'Where does a monk whose *citta* has been freed arise after death?' the Buddha replies:

43. M.I.163.

44. The Venerable Sāriputta discusses this point with a monk:
> 'Then, since even in this life that Tathagata [a title used for the Buddha and Arahants] is really and truly untraceable, is it proper for you to assert: "As I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed One, a brother who has destroyed the deep obsessions (*āsavā*) is broken up and perishes when the body is broken up, and does not exist after death"?'
The monk thereupon admits that he had been wrong. S.III.112.

45. *Hoti*, 'he is' in Pāli is a variant of *bhavati* 'he becomes'.

46. *khandhā*: the body/mind system of a being in this life.

> 'Freed from definition by body (and the other *khandhas*) is the Tathāgatha, Vacchagota. He is deep, boundless, unfathomable as is the great ocean. 'Arises' does not apply to the Tathāgatha. 'Does not arise' does not apply.... He is freed from definition by the *khandhas*.'
>
> M.I.487.

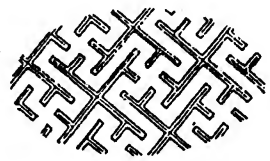
The ceasing of becoming, which is *nibbāna*, and which is not extinction, is beyond comprehension for the unenlightened.[47] But it is difficult for human beings to conceive of 'compassion' apart from the idea of 'existing' in personal form, and bustling about in helpful activity. This, no doubt, is a natural concomitant of our sense-bound condition. This, too, was foreseen:

> 'This was said by the Blessed One...
> "Devas and human beings love becoming (*bhava*); they delight in becoming, rejoice in becoming. When Dhamma is taught to them for the ceasing of becoming, their hearts do not spring up at the idea, and become settled, steady and resolute."'
>
> Itivuttaka 43.

The Buddha's Arahant disciples were accustomed to the idea that it is by following Dhamma, and not by dependence on the intervention of a personal agent, that the living consciousnes (*citta*) is brought to fulfilment. What they could do for their fellows while they were alive was to bring them in contact with the Dhamma. But the scope of the sacred realm is sensed in the suttas as lying beyond the scope of the personal — although it embraces the personal and human. Thus, having served the Dhamma whilst they lived, the Arahant disciples knew that the energies of the awakened *citta* would be added to it at death, and they were prepared to entrust the deeper dispensations of goodness, compassion and wisdom throughout the universe to its benign and saving power.

To be concluded.

Erratum Part I. For Sutra please read Sūtra throughout text.



47. The idea of complete annihilation is not beyond human comprehension, but is *micchā-diṭṭhi*, wrong view.

certainly swept away most of the cobwebs of fantasy so assiduously spun by some of his contemporaries, and it is perhaps no accident that he was, it seems, the original teacher of Sāriputta and Moggallāna, who became the Buddha's most distinguished disciples. According to the *Brahmajāla* commentary there were many other defectors to the Buddha's cause; these probably included his pupil's pupil Brahmadatta. One may infer that Sañjaya's way of questioning everything provided an excellent preparation for the reception of the Buddha's teaching. Malalasekera's estimate of him,[7] though not very felicitously expressed, may well be right: 'It is probably that Sañjaya suspended his judgements only with regard to those questions the answers to which must always remain a matter of speculation. It may be that he wished to impress on his followers the fact that the final answer to these questions lay beyond the domain of speculation, and that he wished to divert their attention from fruitless enquiry and direct it towards the preservation of mental equanimity.'

On the face of it, both King Ajātaśatru of the *Upaniṣad* and King Ajātasattu of the Pali Canon are shown as taking a genuine critical interest in the views of the contemporary philosophers, but here in fact the resemblance ceases. The former has, as it were, one good scene (*Bṛh. Up.* II.1), which is summarised by Swami Nikkhilananda[8] thus:

> The learned and proud Bālāki approached King Ajātaśatru and said: 'I will tell you about Brahman.' He gave twelve descriptions of Brahman as the Soul (Purusha) in the sun, moon, lightning, space, the wind, fire, water and so on; but each time he was told that these deities occupy subordinate positions in the whole of nature. The king then instructed Bālāki about Brahman through the illustration of deep sleep, which is the negation of all attributes and is, at the same time, the source of the positive experiences of the waking dream states.

Here, clearly, the king has a profounder insight into the nature of things than the 'learned and proud' Brahmin. But after this one scene, we hear nothing further about him.

The figure of the latter king, on the other hand, is well fleshed out, with great consistency, in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (Suttas 2 and 16), with further, in part more dubious, details given elsewhere.[9] He is seen as a shrewd but brutal man of action, a parricide and a launcher of aggressive wars (his brutality is also confirmed from Jain sources). His relationship to the Buddha underwent a change, the nature of which is psychologically plausible. He had sided at first with Devadatta (the unsuccessful 'Judas-figure' of Buddhism), impressed by the psychic powers Devadatta had cultivated; after the failure of the latter's attempts on the Master's life (assuming these to be historical!) he realised the Buddha's superior strength. From then on, Ajātasattu seems to have regarded the Buddha with superstitious awe, but to have been devoid of any real understanding: this is perfectly exemplified by the naive cunning with which,

7. *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names* (as n. 6), i, 999-1000.

8. *The Upanishads* i, translated by Swami Nikhilananda, London 1952, 29f.

9. Cf. especially *Book of Discipline* v, 259ff.

according to the opening paragraph of the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, he sought the Master's advice — or rather his precognitive power — before attacking the Vajjians, thinking to exploit for his own ends the fact that 'Tathāgatas do not lie'. His dismissal with especial scorn of Sañjaya's sceptical philosophy therefore simply reflects the practical man's impatience with apparent indecisiveness rather than any genuine insight into the thought of a man who, however wrong-headed or one-sided he may have been, was no fool. In his reply to the king's question, the Buddha commences with the immediate mundane benefits of 'going forth', and gets the king to admit that he would honour even one of his own slaves who had renounced the world. He then explains morality in the same terms as in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, before going on to speak of the higher benefits, leading on through the *jhānas* (absorptions) (which are pre-Buddhist) and the destruction of the *āsavas* or corruptions to the attainment of Enlightenment. The king is duly impressed, perhaps especially because of the wonderfully calm states of mind he hears about, and declares himself a lay-follower. After his departure the Buddha declares, perhaps rather surprisingly, that but for his crime of parricide, King Ajātasattu would have experienced the 'opening of the Dhamma-eye' (i.e. would have become a *sotāpanna* or Stream-winner).

King Ajātasattu of Magadha really existed. And (despite some rather half-hearted attempts at whitewashing him), he was not really a nice man. The king mentioned in the *Upaniṣad* (whether historical or not) is a respectable and indeed respected figure, who clearly demonstrates his genuine understanding of philosophy, to the confusion of a puffed-up Brahmin. The question of borrowing is often a delicate one in literary history, whether religious or secular. Sometimes the resemblance between two texts is palpable, though even then the direction of borrowing may be difficult to establish, and it may be that two related texts are derived from a common source, rather than one from the other. It can happen that Buddhist stories are 'converted' to Christian use, as in the well-known case of the story of *Barlaam and Josaphat*,[10] or stories of non-Buddhist origin are adapted to Buddhist purposes, as in the case of the *Vessantara Jātaka*,[11] the last and most famous of the 547 *Jātaka* stories, the news of whose proven non-Buddhist origin will not be welcome to those Thai monks who regularly preach special sermons on it, since this *Jātaka* is held to be particularly edifying. If we turn to our two like-named kings, the position is less clear-cut. There is in fact one other possible point of contact between the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and the *Dīgha Nikāya*. The *Upaniṣad* opens with an allegorical interpretation of the horse-sacrifice, which bears at least a thematic resemblance to the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (DN 5). Closer inspection, however, reveals no evidence of borrowing in either direction. Influence of either of these texts on the other, then, though remotely possible, is not probable. When we come to the case of King Ajātasattu and his Upaniṣadic counterpart, it is fair to say there can be genuine doubt as to

10. D.M. Lang in *Penguin Guide to Literature* 4: *Classical and Byzantine, Oriental and African*, Harmondsworth 1969, 230f.

11. K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature* (*A History of Indian Literature*, ed. J. Gonda, vii.2.) Wiesbaden, 1983, 80, 83.

whether the resemblance between the two stories is strong enough to prove borrowing or not.[12]

One thing is certain: if there *is* a link, the direction of borrowing in the case of the two kings is from the Pali sutta to the *Upaniṣad* and not vice versa. Oldenberg's contrary suggestion has been ably dealt with by Pande,[13] who, however, ascribed the resemblance to 'a not very dissimilar atmosphere of thought-ferment'. This is fair enough as regards the passages on sacrifice, but less obviously so in the present instance. Actually Pande, being wedded to the almost automatic assumption of Upaniṣadic priority, seems not even to have considered the obvious possibility of borrowing in the reverse direction. But if, with Joshi, we regard this assumption as dubious and mainly due to Hindu prejudice, the situation changes somewhat.

We cannot claim to have established anything with certainty, apart from exploding any tenuous claims for Ajātasattu to be regarded as any kind of philosopher. But his role as a *critic* of philosophers (*and* as a royal critic of Brahmins!) may well have caught the attention of the Upaniṣadic author, who was perhaps on the lookout for a supporting figure to his leading *kṣatriya* character, the great king Janaka. For Pande, the only choice was between an Upaniṣadic origin and coincidence, and since the former was impossible, the latter remained the only option, though one can perhaps detect a note of hesitation in his statement to that effect. If, however, the choice is between a Buddhist origin based on a really firmly attested king, and coincidence, the probabilities are rather different. It begins to look as though the shadowy Upaniṣadic king of Kāśī owes his purely literary existence to that very different and much less admirable, but extremely lifelike character King Ajātasattu of Magadha. Of course, even if we accept this, we have proved little as regards the Buddha's chronology. What we *can* say is that, while we cannot date the *Upaniṣad* back as far as some would wish, an earlier dating rather than a later one remains plausible, while some time, one supposes, must have elapsed to allow the memory of the real Ajātasattu to fade somewhat. While it seems hard to date the Buddha's birth much earlier than 566 BCE, this evidence makes it almost equally hard to date it much later. Thus there is still no proof, but there is at least some support for the idea that the Buddha's dates of 566–486 BCE may be right after all.

Of course, if this evidence were all we had to offer, it would be little more than suggestive. There is, however, one further piece of evidence, this time from China, which strengthens our case considerably and which, it seems fair to suggest, though not unknown to scholars, has been accorded less than its due weight. This is the so-called Dotted Record.[14] According to this tradition, which is first mentioned by Tao-hsüan in his *Ta T'ang nei tien lu* (*Catalogue of T'ang Dynasty Sūtras*) of 664 CE, when Upāli collated the Vinaya after the decease of the Buddha, he marked a dot in the manuscript, and his successors each marked a new dot every year thereafter. During a visit to Canton about

12. Joshi (n.4, 51) definitely accepts the identity of the two kings.
13. As n. 5.
14. As n. 1, 14.

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486 CE, Sanghabhadra inscribed the 975th dot, which places the Master's passing in or about 486 BCE. This Chinese evidence has both a strength and a weakness. Its obvious weakness is that we do not know its basis: the story that Upāli, who traditionally recited the Vinaya code at the First Council after the Master's death, put the first dot on the manuscript, is impossible to take literally if only because there was certainly no manuscript of any part of the Canon in existence at that time or for long afterwards. Its strength is that we have here a Chinese witness, wholly independent of the impugned Sinhalese sources, which comes up with a date extremely close to that derived from those sources. To assert that this is pure coincidence might look a little like special pleading.

To many people, it may seem of little importance to know exactly when the Buddha lived, and certainly the fact that he did indeed live and bring us his teaching is of infinitely more significance. For those who do care about such things, it seems that we can still reasonably believe that he died in or about 486 BCE. In that case the date of the Enlightenment, from which a real Buddhist era ought to be derived would be 531 BCE, or just 2522 years ago.

Letters to the Editor

IS BUDDHISM UNIQUE?

Dear Sir,

Although Garry Thomson in his article 'Is Buddhism Unique?' (*Middle Way*, Feb. 1991) is right to emphasize Buddhism's largely creditable record with regard to religious tolerance, I find his conclusions not very useful. If the uniqueness of Buddhism has something to do with 'not clinging to any beliefs' it is hard to see why Buddhist practice has been by and large so consistent, and even harder to see what Buddhism has to offer modern man living in an era of almost total disbelief.

Buddhism is not a form of scepticism and certain positive and negative presuppositions are made by all Buddhist writers, even by Nagarjuna. 'In its core, Buddhism is a doctrine of salvation,' writes Conze in *A Short History of Buddhism*. This implies, as of course Buddhist thinkers actually state, that there is a need for salvation: in other words the world we live in is fatally flawed and the human condition is necessarily miserable. The originality of the Buddhist response to this perennial problem is to regard the basic cause of suffering to be ignorance of man's true nature — and not, for example, disobedience. Man makes himself miserable by 'clinging', and the reason why he clings is because he has the erroneous idea that there is such a thing as an underlying self or soul. This distinguishes Buddhism at once from both Hinduism and Christianity: Buddhism was known in India as the 'No-soul doctrine'. Pre-Mahayana (why not simply say Hinayana and have done with it?) Buddhism was not, however, an illusionist theory since the ultimate constituents of the world of appearances, the 'dharma', were perfectly real. All this is summarized succinctly in the *Visuddhimagga*:

> 'Suffering alone exists, none who suffer;
> The deed there is, but no doer thereof;
> Nirvana is, but no one seeking it;
> The Path there is, but none who travel it.'

This is a clear and emphatic statement of definite beliefs, both as to what is and what is not: no trace of scepticism here.

Although it is true that 'clinging' to specific beliefs can give rise to appalling crimes of intolerance, this is not the main cause of human distress today; it is rather clinging to material possessions that is the problem. Intellectual scepticism is not a useful antidote to dogmatism in an age such as ours; on the contrary we need something quite definite to oppose to the general scepticism. As it happens, Buddhism does have a message for our age but I do not think its message is, or should be, simply a warning against taking particular views too seriously or literally.

Yours sincerely,

R. MULES
LONDON

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Dear Sir,

Garry Thomson's article under the heading 'Is Buddhism Unique?' (*Middle Way*, February) raised some interesting points without ever squarely facing the question from which it began — not surprisingly since uniqueness is a very ambiguous concept. If it's equated with distinctiveness and originality then all enduring systems of thought or belief are either unique or unworthy of study. Claims to exclusive possession of a saving truth are another matter.

Gotama Buddha certainly presents a unique paradox for western man. The Buddha image is the supreme symbol of spiritual attainment and repose and yet the man whose life inspired it worshipped no god and explicitly denied the existence of the soul. The fact that there *is* one close approximation to the doctrine of *anattā* in western thought (in the philosophy of David Hume) merely heightens the paradox because it confronts us with a point of fundamental agreement between the greatest of oriental mystics and the most thoroughgoing sceptic in European philosophy. For an era such as ours in which secularism is spiritually impoverished and religion intellectually bankrupt I feel inclined to say that that agreement is 'supremely important'.

As it happens the Sutta Pitaka does make unique claims. A statement such as 'Void are the systems of other recluses' is just as categorical as Christ's 'No man cometh to the Father except through me'. The difference is that Christianity's claims to uniqueness linked beliefs about the means to salvation much more closely to the *fact* of Christ's historical ministry, thus tending to make the propagation of biographical information about him a precondition for all else. Gotama, by contrast, claimed rather to have given perfect definition to *principles* which were, nonetheless, generally available. The capacity to find and pursue the Eightfold Path intuitively was viewed as innate, though having it made explicit by the Master conferred considerable advantages. (I once had contacts with a convict who said that he became a Buddhist when someone told him he already was one!) The Suttas in short claimed uniqueness but in a non-exclusive way and the missionary tempo of Buddhism was always more relaxed in consequence.

Sincerely,

DAVID EVANS
LEEDS

FOUNDERS DAY 1991

Dear Editor,

It was a privilege to hear Sylvia Swain's talk on Founders Day 1990 and I am pleased to see that my plea has resulted in its publication in *The Middle Way*. However, Sylvia appears to give sole credit for the foundation of the Buddhist Society to Christmas Humphreys, whereas I am convinced from personal knowledge that it is highly problematic if there would ever have been a Buddhist Society if that somewhat impractical man had been without the encouragement, advice and support, in the dark days, of Miss Aileen M. Faulkner — later to become Mrs Christmas Humphreys. She was the first secretary and treasurer. 'Toby' and 'Puck', as known to their close friends, were a devoted couple who believed they had met in a previous life and would do so again. Mrs Humphreys designed the Society's lotus logo and the cover of *The Middle Way* and she was a highly esteemed silversmith. I trust that her name will always be honoured by the Society alongside the name of her husband. Their essential goodness and kindness shines through in photographs of them together.

Yours sincerely,
ARTHUR BURTON STIBBON

COPY DEADLINE

The deadline for the August issue of *The Middle Way* is 12th June 1991.

Publication cannot be guaranteed for material received after this date.

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Buddhism and Sexuality — some notes

MW AUG 1991
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Paul Williams

The following short paper was presented as part of a day-school on Religion and Sexuality at Westminster College, Oxford. Its concern is with historical actuality rather than contemporary prescription. The audience were undergraduates mainly with an interest in the Christian religion and only slight knowledge of Buddhism. It may however be of some interest to others.

To be frank, apart from in Tantra, where sexual embodiment is seen as providing the physiological basis for enlightenment, Buddhism as a whole has not been very keen on sex. Even in Tantra an interest in sexual embodiment comes not from an inordinate interest in sex itself (in spite of what is often thought) but the relevance of physiology to the possibility of enlightenment. In other words, Buddhism is a soteriology, a path to liberation for which sexual activity is seen, in the main, as being at best a distraction and at worst a positive antithesis. Apart from controlling sexual desire in order to limit its potentially antithetical influence, Buddhism *qua* Buddhism has not had any great interest in sexuality as such. As a historical phenomenon Buddhism has not been a religion which sought to influence every aspect of an exclusive lay and monastic adherent's life.

A matrix for understanding the Buddhist position not only on sexuality but other matters of doctrine and practice can be drawn from a highly influential attempt at clarification and synthesis found in the work of the eleventh century scholar and missionary to Tibet, Atiśa. Atiśa classifies religious practice and practitioners under three 'scopes' — the lesser, middling and superior. Those of lesser scope are concerned solely with their own welfare in a strongly 'materialistic' sense. They want money, fame and so on. Appropriate for these practitioners is teaching concerning future lives, and the most important teaching for future lives is morality, for it is morality that determines whether future rebirths will be in favourable circumstances or horribly unpleasant ones. It is not appropriate to teach monasticism to those of lesser scope. We are not here concerned as such with issues of enlightenment, the cessation of all rebirth. One who follows a religious path should not try to run before he or she can walk.

Gradually the practitioner comes to appreciate the importance of morality, and transforms into a righteous person concerned with future lives rather than this one. For that practitioner it is appropriate to teach the sufferings of all rebirths, even favourable ones. As the Buddha taught in the first Noble Truth, all is suffering in one way or another. As our spiritual pilgrim comes to appreciate this, he or she transforms into one of middling scope. His or her motivation becomes one of abandoning all future rebirths, that is, attaining liberation, enlightenment. The characteristic of this stage is renunciation, mirrored socially (although not exclusively) in the institutions of monasticism. Renunciation is fundamentally a renunciation of the very forces which

fuel rebirth — greed (which includes lust), hatred and delusion.

But Atiśa was a follower of Mahāyāna, for whom *mere* enlightenment, the cessation of all suffering through the cessation of the forces which fuel rebirth, falls short of his conception of what *perfect* spiritual fulfilment might be. There are those, he says, who see the sufferings of others as their own sufferings, who cannot rest while others still suffer. Out of this great compassion comes the highest scope — that of attaining full Buddhahood, the perfection of wisdom and compassion, for the benefit of all sentient beings. Such are not afraid of rebirth if it will benefit others. For these practitioners the appropriate teaching is great compassion, activity which is for the benefit of others no matter what that activity might be.

Atiśa's structure reminds us that the assessment of statements in Buddhism requires reference to the stage on the path at which they are intended. It is important in understanding the perspective of Buddhism to appreciate that Buddhist utterances are intended for a purpose and are made with reference to a context supplied by a path to a particular goal. Each of Atiśa's scopes is in succession higher than the preceding, and incorporates what precedes, but also transcends it, modifying as it incorporates.

We can distintinguish sexuality in the sense of being sexually embodied, from sexuality relating to conduct between the sexes. Sexual embodiment itself is for the Buddhist tradition a reflection of a particular rather decadent stage in the cosmic process. According to one well-known Buddhist myth, at the beginning of the cosmic cycle beings were not sexually embodied. Beings were ethereal, beings of light. Gradually, it is said, due to developing a taste for a coarse rather than subtle etheric food, their bodies also became coarser. Eventually sexual organs appeared initially as part of the process of evacuation. Due to tendencies from previous sexually-embodied lives, some beings engaged in intercourse publicly. Others thought this disgusting and made the whole performance secret. Subsequently all kinds of other decadent developments arose, and eventually we ended up where we are now, beings prey to all ten types of immorality (the list is of ten types, but there may be more which Buddhists had not thought of). Thus sexual embodiment itself is the result of, but also a major contributor to, the growth of cosmic decadence. But for the fall, there would be no sexuality. A Buddha has as one of his marks a penis which is said to be withdrawn into a sheath 'like a horse'. This initially weird requirement of a Buddha indicates that while male he is in a sense not 'malely embodied'; while he fulfils the requirements of sexual embodiment (he has after all a son) he also transcends it.

With no sexual embodiment a major source of distraction on the path to enlightenment would be abandoned. In general the Buddhist tradition sees sexuality as a force, often completely out of control, motivated by desire. Desire is, as is well-known, a major constituent empowering rebirth and thus continued suffering. The three root poisons are greed, hatred and delusion. Greed is desire. The basic constituent of enlightenment in Buddhism is seeing things the way they really are. Sexual activity is seen as an extensive and time-consuming game, often leading to unhappiness, never to permanent

happiness, culminating in the rubbing together of sex organs and a momentary feeling of bliss (sometimes). Nothing of any *real* significance changes. Seeing sex as more than this is not seeing things the way they really are, and is stoking the fires that lead to one's own and others' unhappiness. Overwhelming sexual desire is the result of not understanding, and itself leads to an overestimation which perpetuates misunderstanding and leads to further unhappiness — 'the blindness of love'.

It is within this framework that we can place Buddhist treatment of sexuality. Sexuality is initially to be controlled, firstly through vows and precepts and then through meditation which lessens craving through seeing the truth about the nature of sex and desire. As the great Nāgārjuna says:

> The body is a vessel filled
> With excrement, urine, lungs and liver;
> He whose vision is obscured and does not see
> A woman thus, lusts for her body

(*Ratnāvalī* 150, trans. Hopkins; he adds that a man's body is the same (v. 165)).

Eventually meditation leads to the complete transcendence of sexual desire, so that a monk is not even affected by lustful dreams. In the Pali canon we have the case of an elderly monk over eighty years old who was asked how many times he had experienced sexual intercourse. The reply was that such a question is inappropriate. Rather, the questioner should ask how many times images of desire had arisen in the mind of the monk. On being asked this, our monk responded that he was not aware of ever having had any (M 111 125).

Those of Atiśa's first lesser scope are concerned with morality leading to favourable future rebirths. They do not have to be monks or nuns. For laypeople sexual morality is a matter of permission within a framework of control. The purpose of control here is basically to lessen the forces which lead to unhappiness. Avoidance of misconduct in matters of desire is of course the third of the basic five precepts to which it is hoped all Buddhists will adhere. Misconduct relating to sexual matters is clearly delineated in, for example, basic Tibetan manuals for those (frequently laity) of the lesser scope. Sexual intercourse is permissible only with one's own partner. 'One's own partner' is generally taken to mean wife or husband, but in this respect Buddhism has generally taken whatever is customary in the relevant country. Buddhism is not *qua* Buddhism concerned with marriage, which is historically in Buddhism seen as a civil matter. Likewise topics seen as being matters of sexual morality in the West are often not classed under the third precept in Buddhism but some other precept. Abortion is a matter of killing; as is *in vitro* fertilisation. In Western thought many matters are seen as being *sexual* which in Buddhism are seen as matters of right relationships between sentient beings to which the sexual element is incidental. One should not intentionally hurt another. Sex with one other than one's partner often involves deception. One Tibetan lama has said that the reason why adultery is wrong is that it causes disputes and violence (Dhargyey, 1976, p.81). But he

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promotion to positions of rank and influence are slim. Doubtless a fair proportion of new ordinands are led to this course by genuine religious motives; others may be youths who, disappointed by the inadequate results of Maoism, are searching for different ideologies, whether old or new. Some may be people with poor prospects who expect a monastic career to be easier than it is likely in fact to be. One cannot discover their motivation by questioning them, for they are (like all those who endured the cultural revolution) shy of strangers and usually decline to be drawn into serious conversation.

From what I have heard, the extent of Buddhist revival varies very much from place to place, e.g. it has been most striking in and around the ancient city of Chengdu (Chengtu) in Sizhnan (Szechuan) province; yet almost nil in the vicinity of Sian (site of the ancient T'ang capital and once a great centre of Buddhism). In recent centuries, the four coastal provinces, lying roughly between Shanghai and Hong Kong, have had the largest number of Buddhist monasteries and believers. This would seem to be broadly true of the present time also. I observed that monasteries in Shanghai, two large ones near Ningpo and some in Guangtung (Kwangtung) province are flourishing, and I have heard that some places in Fujian (Fukien) province are now the most active Buddhist centres in China, with the exception of Chengdu.

Of Chinese Buddhism's four sacred mountains, the only one I have visited since the advent of communism is Puto (Potala) Shan, a hilly island some six hours by sea from Shanghai. It is sacred to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, called in Chinese Guanyin (Kuanyin). Of the four or five main temples, several were burnt down during the cultural revolution period. One, close to the highest peak, has been replaced by a hotel. The others are being very beautifully restored, with the help of funds from Japan and from overseas Chinese communities. Of the hundred odd small monasteries and nunneries, most have been taken over by the State and turned into lodging houses for tourists. In the main temples, despite the endless stream of sightseers, an ambience of Buddhist piety prevails. Elsewhere on the island, Buddhist devotees are so greatly outnumbered by trippers that one feels almost nothing of the special atmosphere that pervaded sacred mountains in the past. It is too early, however, to say whether or not that atmosphere will gradually return.

Before the communist government was established in Peking at the end of 1948, there were 400 million Chinese people — already considered far too many for the land to support at better than subsistence level. Now there are considerably over 1000 million! A traveller's overall impression is one of limitless masses whose sheer numbers make shopping, city bus-trips or eating in ordinary restaurants quite unpleasant and even hazardous. On buses sometimes one's clothes and even one's skin get torn, so closely are people packed together! Crowds are so ubiquitous that it is hard to maintain the peace and quiet essential to monastic life, except in temples situated in remote areas difficult to reach. Perhaps a solution may lie in building monasteries so unremarkable in appearance as to attract no sightseers. Ah, but what a sad solution that would be!

A great obstacle to the progress of Buddhism is the shortage of monks, nuns and layfolk able to function as high-level teachers. Very few qualified

Dharma Masters survive from pre-communist days. Though young people receiving ordination are considerably larger in number than can have been expected, facilities for advanced master-to-disciple instruction are limited by the shortage of well-qualified middle-aged teachers. Worse still, many monastery libraries remain closed, which may well be due to their being empty (!) after being sacked by Red Guards. Moreover, previously when reading news about Buddhism in China since the communist revolution, I had formed the impression that the few individuals still permitted at that time to live as monks in certain monasteries were receiving training aimed at making them knowledgeable about Buddhist history and philosophy in a manner more suited to research students than to people with a religious vocation. How far something of this sort may still be the case, I do not know.

As to layfolk, in most of the monasteries I visited I was happy to see quite a fair number prostrating themselves in the traditional manner and teaching their small children to do so. Among them, elderly people predominated over younger ones, women over men. Both in China during pre-communist days and now, it was (is) difficult to judge how many such people had (have) an understanding of Buddhism, and how many were (are) motivated by a simple desire to secure good fortune by showing respect to (vaguely believed in) 'supernatural beings'. The Chinese, unlike the Tibetans and Mongols, have never been a nation of ardent Buddhists. According to rough estimates, Buddhists numbered about 10% of the population in pre-communist China. Now the percentage (excluding predominantly Tibetan and Mongol areas) must be far less. Moreover, knowledge of Buddhism among the masses is almost nil. Yet, if I am right in thinking that old values and beliefs persist, then the number of people with almost no knowledge of, say, Buddhism and Taoism, who nevertheless have a vague yet strong belief in a supernatural order embracing those two and several other religions, must be quite large. Thus, there may be a considerable reservoir of potential Buddhists awaiting the advent of teachers able to put the Buddha Dharma across to audiences already somewhat favourably disposed towards it.

My three concluding paragraphs are more purely subjective in nature. While on Puto (Potala) Island, despite being dismayed by the vast preponderence of secular sightseers over Buddhist pilgrims, I enjoyed some moments of what I like to think of as "spiritual insight". In one big monastery's huge and, on the whole, gloomy main hall, I came suddenly upon a great blaze of light emanating from its centre, where hundreds if not thousands of candles irradiated a splendid statue of Avalokitesvara (Kuanyin) Bodhisattva. Their radiance was brilliant, yet (being candlelight) not harsh but lovely, and of course dramatically emphasized by the surrounding gloom. The sharp, not over-sweet, tang of Chinese incense hung upon the air. Momentarily, I was, as it were, transported into a realm of bliss, feeling the same admixture of happiness and awe which had sometimes filled me on visits to sacred mountains during my early days in China. Joyfully I reflected that something I had mourned as loved-and-lost was very, very much alive!

A day later, being old and but recently risen from a sick-bed, I took a bus to

the peak of the highest of the island's mountains and walked down to sea-level amidst an endless stream of sightseers. Working a way slowly upwards came a very thin stream of which I should, properly, have been a part. It was composed of devout Buddhists, each carrying a yellow pilgrim's bag on which the Bodhisattva's form was depicted, a string of yellowish beads for counting invocations, and a pilgrim's staff. Most were women, many of them elderly, some very old. As they toiled up the long, long flight of stone steps leading to where the main monastery (now replaced by a hotel!) had once stood, I saw on their faces the sweetly joyous expressions with which I was familiar from my pilgrimages to sacred mountains in days gone by. I said to myself: "John, you have come HOME!" My happiness knew no bounds.

While still on that island, I visited several famous caves, in one of which devout Buddhists hope to see the radiant form of the Bodhisattva, whereas those who accompany them, if less devout or less compassionate in their treatment of sentient beings, see nothing but the walls of the cave. It is situated at a distance from the main 'sights', so, by waiting a long time, I managed to be alone there for a while and stood peering longingly at a certain fissure where the vision is said to take form. Alas, I saw nothing unusual, except for very faint flashes of swirling light, variously coloured, which may well have been an optical delusion conjured up by the intensity and unnatural fixity of my gaze. Well, that was disappointing — and yet I came away in a daze of happiness. Something of that happiness lingers still, especially when my thoughts turn to widespread resurgence of Buddhism in China, the fruits of which I shall not live to see, though I can picture them vividly. I possess very little evidence on which to build that dream of the future, but have not the smallest doubt that it will be fulfilled.

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The Generalization of an Old Yogic Attainment in Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature: Some Notes on *Jātismara*[1]

by Gregory Schopen

I. Introduction: Ideas Concerning Jātismara Found in the Nikāya/Āgamas

The obtainment of *jātismara*, "the ability to recollect or remember one's former births," is well known in early Buddhist sūtra literature. It occurs as the first of three "sciences" (*vidyā*), the fourth of the five or six "superknowledges" (*abhijñā*), and the eighth of the ten "powers" of a Tathāgata (*tathāgataḍaśabala*).

Many years ago the late Professor Demiéville published a richly detailed study of the references to *jātismara* in the *Nikāya/Āgama* literature, which we might quickly summarize. Referring to *Majjhima* i 22–23, he says, "le Buddha définit les trois *vijjā* telles qu'il les obtint par la discipline spirituelle dans la solitude de la forêt, après avoir atteint les quatre degrés de *jhāna*." He notes that *Majjhima* i 278–80 refers to "un bhikkhu qui, par la méditation solitaire, s'est acquis diverses facultés mentales, dont les dernières énumérées et définies, après les quatre degrés de *jhāna*, sont: le connaissance des existences antérieures, l'oeil divin, la fin des écoulements," that according to *Saṃyukta Āgama* TT. XII, 3, 83[a-b] "les trois *vidyā* sont attribuées à ceux qui n'ont plus à étudier (*açaikṣa*), c'est-à-dire aux saints du quatrième 'fruit' ou degré, aux arhats." He notes further that at *Saṃyutta* i 196 "ayant atteint l'*arhattvam*, Vaṅgīsa déclare avoir obtenu les trois *vijjā*," that at *Saṃyutta* ii 210 "Kassapa posséda les quatre *jhāna*, et les six *abhiññā*," and that at

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Saṃyutta i 191 "sur cinq cents arhats entourant le Buddha, soixante possèdent les trois *vijjā*, soixante les six *abhiññā;* soixante sont délivrés de deux manières; les autres sont délivrés par la sagesse (*paññā*)." Finally, he notes that at *Dīgha* i 13 "la mémoire des existences antérieures au nombre d'une à plusieurs centaines de milliers, résultant d'une état de *samādhi* obtenu par le zèle ardent, l'effort, l'application, la vigilance, l'attention soutenue. . . ," is attributed to non-Buddhist ascetics, and that the independent Chinese translation of the *Brahmajāla-sutta* TT. XII, 10, 91[b] says that "s'il y a un religieux hérétique qui tranche le désir et pratique le *dhyāna*, et si son imagination se trouve en *samādhi*, il peut penser aux choses de vingt kalpa passés."[2]

On the basis of these and similar passages it is quite clear that in the *Nikāya/Āgama* literature *jātismara*, "the ability to recollect or remember one's former births," invariably occurs as only one of a list of faculties, never by itself. It is equally clear that it is invariably connected with the higher stages of meditational technique, that it was, in fact, a concomitant of the most sophisticated forms of yogic attainment. It is also clear that in this literature it is ascribed only to religious virtuosos—notably to *aśaikṣas*, Arhats, and, of course, to the Buddha himself.

These findings are, of course, of interest in themselves. But they also are of interest because references to *jātismara* continue to be found in Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature, and a comparison of the Mahāyāna references with those found in the *Nikāya/Āgama* texts will allow us to see how that movement we now call the Mahāyāna handled a specifically "elitist" idea of a particular ascetic or yogic attainment.

II. The Continuation of the Ideas Found in the Nikāya/Āgamas in Some Mahāyāna Sūtras & A First Indication of Something Different: The Upāliparipṛcchā.

There are a number of references to *jātismara* in Mahāyāna sūtra literature that remain close in character to the references found in the *Nikāya/Āgamas*. This is the case, for example, in the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra,* where *jātismara* is said to be obtained—as one of the ten "powers" of a Tathāgata—as the result of abiding in a particular samādhi.[3] It

is also the case in the *Samādhirāja-sūtra,* where the chief interlocutor, Candraprabha, is described as "one who has done his duty under former Jinas, has planted roots of merit, has the recollection of his former births, has inspired speech, etc. (*pūrvajinakṛtādhikāro 'varopitakuśalamūlo jātismaro labdhapratibhāno . . .*)," and where the same Candraprabha is explicitly urged to train for "control of the body" (*kāyasaṃvara*) and "purity of body and conduct" (*pariśuddhakāyasamudācāra*), since the Bodhisattva who has *kāyasaṃvara* and is *pariśuddhakāyasamudācāra* is said to obtain—again as one of the ten "powers" of a Tathāgata—*jātismara,* the faculty by which he recollects his former states of existence (*pūrve nivāsam anusmarati*).[4]

These passages, and a limited number of similar passages, are not so remarkable in themselves. They do, however, indicate that *jātismara* continued to be connected with the religious virtuoso; that it continued to be perceived as a concomitant of meditation (*samādhi*) and yogic discipline at an advanced level; and that it continued to occur primarily in association with the various lists of "powers," "sciences," and " superknowledges." We do not have to read far, however, before we begin to find something quite different, and this difference—as we shall see —tends to occur on something like a massive scale.

When we move to other, and perhaps later Mahāyāna texts, we begin to find *jātismara* occurring in a rather different context. We might look, for example, at the first "section" of the *Vinayaviniścaya-upāliparipṛcchā.* Python has pointed out that the text as we have it "se divise en deux sections" and that "chaque section se suffit à elle-même." The first "section" opens with the Buddha looking over the assembly and asking "qui serait capable (*utsahate*), dans les temps à venir, pour le maintien de la bonne Loi, de se fixer sur ce parfait et complet Éveil . . . et de veiller à faire mûrir les êtres (*sattvaparipāka*) par des moyens très variés (*nānā-upāya*). . . ."[5] In response, a long list of Bodhisattvas declare their "capability" to save beings, each specifying his particular means. Among these Bodhisattvas, one, Maṇibhadra, declares: *bcom ldan 'das bdag ni sngon gyi skye ba rjes su dran par bgyid pas sems can rnams yongs su smin par bgyid par spro lags so:* "O Blessed One, I shall be willing and able to mature beings by causing them to recollect their former births."[6]

In this short passage we begin to sense a fairly fundamental difference. It involves at least two interrelated ideas. First, *jātismara* is here not the result of meditational development on the part of the individual, but something that is effected by an external agent—a Bodhisattva—for the purpose of furthering the religious life of "beings." Second, since the text is here concerned with "beings" it is clear that in this passage *jātismara* is not presented as a faculty attainable only by the religious virtuoso. Instead, it appears as something available in one way or another to all "beings." We find similar indications of this fundamental difference in several passages in the *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra.*

III. The Difference Confirmed: Two Cases from the Suvarṇabhāsottama and Their Parallels

There are four references to *jātismara* in the *Suvarṇabhāsottama,* three of them in Chapter Three. This is of some significance, since Nobel has argued that this chapter "ist der Kern unseres ganzen Goldglanz-Sūtra."[7] Chapter Three appears, in fact, to have been a kind of "confessional formulary" intended for individual recitation, a formulary by which one ritually expressed the intentions of his act, "confessed" or declared his faults, worshipped the Buddhas, and turned over the resulting merit to specific ends—all according to a specific sequence also found elsewhere, notably in the *Bhadracarīpraṇidhāna* (vss. iv ff.) and the *Bodhicaryāvatara* (Chs. II & III).

The individual, reciting the words of the formulary, begins by declaring a series of pious wishes which he hopes the formulary will effect: "By the excellent drum of golden light [i.e., these *deśanāgāthās,* "confessional verses," or the "confessional formulary" that constitutes this chapter] let the woes in the triple-thousand world be suppressed, the woes in the evil states, the woes in the world of Yama. . . . May those beings who dwell in an evil state [*apāyabhūmau*], their limbs alight with blazing fire, hear the sound of the drum. May they take up the refrain: 'homage to the Buddha.' May all beings be mindful of their (former) births during hundreds of births, thousands of millions of births [*jātismarāḥ satva bhavantu sarve / jātiśatā jātisahas-*

rakoṭyaḥ], etc."[8] Further on in the formulary, after the "confession" of faults, the worship of the Buddhas, and the "going for refuge," the individual reciting the formulary is to say: "And by this good act [*kuśalena karmaṇā*], may I ere long become a Buddha. . . . And may I be continually mindful of former births for hundreds of births, thousands of millions of births [*jātismaro nitya bhaveya cāhaṃ / jātiśatā jātisahasrakoṭyaḥ*], etc."[9]

Both these occurrences of *jātismara* in the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* have fairly close parallels elsewhere. In the *Bhadracarīpraṇidhāna,* another "formulary" intended for and used in individual recitation, a formulary by which, again, the individual is to express the intentions of his act, declare his faults, worship the Buddhas, and turn over the resulting merit to specific ends, we find:

> "Whatever is the merit (*śubhaṃ*) accumulated by me from honoring, worshipping, confessing, rejoicing, and beseeching—all that I turn over for enlightenment. //12//
>
> As numerous as are all the living beings in the ten directions, may they always be at ease and free from illness. May their religious purposes (*dhārmiku artho*) be successful and their wishes fulfilled! //15//
>
> And may I, practicing the practice for enlightenment in all rebirths, be possessed of the memory of my former births (*bodhicariṃ ca ahaṃ caramāṇo / bhavi jātismaru sarvagatīṣu*) . . . //16//[10]

Something very like what we see in both the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* and the *Bhadracarīpraṇidhāna* is also found in the tenth chapter of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatara.* This chapter is, I think, of particular significance because Śāntideva appears here to be speaking as an individual religious man, not as a "professional theologian": he is here dedicating his meritorious act—that is to say, the exposition of the Dharma in the form of the *Bodhicaryāvatara*—in the same way as countless individual donors have done in Buddhist donative inscriptions. He says first in reference to other living beings: "through the power of my meritorious act (*maina kuśalabalena,* X. 10)," "through my meritorious acts (*matkuśalaiḥ,* X. 15)," ". . . may they always have memory of

their former births! (. . . *santu jātismara sadā*, X. 27)." Later, in regard to himself, he says "through this merit of mine (*anena mama puṇyena*, X. 31) . . . may I always obtain recollection of my former births and the going forth (. . . *jātismaratvaṃ pravrajyāṃ ahaṃ ca prāpnuyāṃ sadā*, X. 51)."[11]

In all of these passages, as in the *Upāliparipṛcchā*, *jātismara* occurs without the invariable association with lists of other faculties—the ten "powers," the three "sciences," etc.—found in the *Nikāya/Āgama* literature studied by Demiéville; in all these passages *jātismara* occurs without the usually invariable association with the religious virtuoso; and here, again, *jātismara* is no longer associated with the higher forms of meditational development. In both the first occurrence in the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* and in Śāntideva's dedication, *jātismara* is again, as in the *Upāliparipṛcchā*, both something that is available to all living beings—even those in the hells—and something that can be effected by an external agent. In the *Suvarṇa*, the *Bhadracarī* and in Śāntideva the obtainment of *jātismara* is one of the reasons for which the individual undertakes the act of "confession" and worship, one of the things to which he turns over the resulting merit. It is not through meditational activity, but *kuśalena karmaṇā*, "through a meritorious act," and *anena mama puṇyena*, "through merit," that *jātismara* is to be obtained through "whatever is the merit (*śubhaṃ*) accumulated through honoring, worshipping, confessing, rejoicing, etc." That this—in part at least—came to be the most common conception of *jātismara* in Mahāyāna sūtra literature is further confirmed by yet another passage from the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* and its parallels.

IV. A Passage from the Suvarṇabhāsottama & the Emergence of a Pattern: The Obtainment of Jātismara through Non-meditational Activity Involving Ritual Acts & Sacred Images

The third and final reference to *jātismara* in the third chapter of the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* occurs in the following passage:

yo vandate stoṣyati daśabalān sadā ca
prasannaśuddhāmalamānasena
imāya pariṇāmanavarṇitāya
ṣaṣṭiṃ ca kalpāñ jahate apāyan //

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etebhi ślokebhi ca varṇitebhiḥ
puruṣāḥ striyo brāhmaṇakṣatriyāś ca
yo stoṣyate muni kṛtāñjalibhiḥ sthihitvā
sarvatra jātismaraṇo jātiṣu //

sarvāṅgasarvendriyaśobhitāṅgo
vicitrapuṇyebhi guṇair upetaḥ
narendrarājaiś ca sa pūjitaḥ sadā
etādṛśo bheṣyati tatra tatra //[12]

Although Professor Nobel describes his text here as "sehr unsicher," and although Professor Emmerick has understood the text a little differently than I would, still I think the "parallel" passages that will be cited below indicate that these verses should be translated as follows:

> Who always worships and praises the Daśabalas with a devout, pure, and spotless mind by means of this (formulary) which is praised as (a way of) turning over merit, he avoids (birth in) the hells for sixty kalpas. //
>
> And whoever—men, women, brāhmaṇas, and kṣatriyas—having stood with his hands in the gesture of reverence, praises the Muni by means of these celebrated verses, he has everywhere in his rebirths recollection of his former births; //
>
> He has all his members, all his faculties, and a beautiful body; he is possessed of qualities and manifold merits and is always honored by the kings of men—everywhere he will be such as this. //[13]

This translation, I hope, makes it clear that *jātismara* occurs here, as elsewhere even in the *Suvarṇabhāsottama*, as a stipulated reward or "blessing" (*anuśaṃsa*) for a form of non-meditational religious activity—in this case for "worshipping and praising" the Buddhas by means of the ritualized recitation of this specific formulary—and that its obtainment is open to all: "men, women, brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas." But that this passage is only one example of a definite pattern is clear from a number of other passages elsewhere, where ritualized acts of worship of varying degrees of elaboration are said to result in the same thing. We might look first at a few passages where the ritualized acts of worship are rather simple and uncomplicated.

The first occurrence we might note is in a short passage in

the *Avalokana-sūtra* (*'phags pa spyan ras gzigs shes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 34, 234–1–8),[14] the Sanskrit text of which is preserved at *Mahāvastu* ii 366.5–6. Here, although the larger context concerns the ritual presentation of items to, and the worship of, the stūpas of the Tathāgata, our passage says simply of the individual that ". . . having done pūjā to the Tathāgata, he becomes one who has recollection of his former births, and he is not carried away by passions, etc. (. . . *pūjāṃ kṛtvā tathāgate / jātismaraś ca so bhoti na so rāgena hrīyati*, etc.)."

In a passage from the *Saṃghāṭa-sūtra* found at Gilgit we also find: "The Blessed One said: 'Listen Bhaiṣajyasena! The man who at the moment of death, being deprived of life, after having rendered his mind devoutly inclined towards the Tathāgata, has spoken thus: "Homage to the Blessed One, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Completely and Perfectly Awakened One" — he, having done so a single time, O Bhaiṣajyasena, through that root of merit will experience the ease of the gods of the thirty-three for sixty aeons; he will have recollection of the succession of his former births for eighty aeons (*sa tena bhaiṣajyasena kuśalamūlena ṣaṣṭiḥ kalpān trāyastriṃśatāṃ devānāṃ sukham anubhaviṣyati. aśitiḥ kalpāṃ jātyājātismaro bhaviṣyati*).'"[15]

Elsewhere, the ritual activity is specifically said to involve the use of images and is more elaborately described. In another text from Gilgit, the *Tathāgatabimbakārāpaṇa-sūtra*, in reference to which Professor Mette says "die grammatische Konstruktion ist nicht immer durchsichtig," the making, bathing and worshipping of an image of the Buddha is said to result in the obtainment of *jātismara*. Of the doer of such acts it is said: *yaḥ kaścid bhikṣur vā bhikṣunī vā upāsako [vā] upāsikā vā kṣatriyo vā brāhmaṇo vā vaiśyo vā śudro vā evaṃrūpāsu jātiṣu śrutidharo bhavati. jatismaro bhavati:* "A monk or nun or lay man or woman, a kṣatriya or brāhmaṇa or vaiśya or śudra comes to be in all births one who retains what has been heard and remembers his former births."[16]

In the Gilgit text of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* it is said that if "friends, relatives, and kinsmen who will go for refuge to the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru perform *pūjā* in a certain way (*īdṛśena prayogena pūjāṃ kurvanti*) for the sake of a man who has just died," the result will be that either "his consciousness could return again immediately (and) he then becomes aware of himself [i.e. of his 'judgement' before Yama, which has just taken place] as if in a dream; or if on the seventh day or the twenty-first or thirty-fifth or forty-ninth day his consciousness would be reborn again, he would obtain recollection. He himself (in either case) is a direct witness to (the effects of) merit, demerit, and the results of his (past) actions (. . . *tasya vijñānaṃ punar eva pratinivarteta svāpnāntara ivātmānaṃ saṃjānāti; yadi vā saptame divase . . . yadi vā navacatvāriṃśatime divase tasya vijñānaṃ nivarteta, smṛtim upalabhet; so kuśalam akuśalaṃ karmavipākaṃ svayam eva pratyakṣo bhavati*)." The pūjā to be done is then described in some detail: ". . . for seven days and nights the obligation of the *Uposadha* possessed of eight parts is to be undertaken, and for the community of monks pūjā and service is to be performed with food and drink, with all the requisites, according to one's abilities; three times in the night, three times in the day worship is to be done (*namasyitavyaṃ*) to the Blessed One Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha, the Tathāgata; forty-nine times this sūtra is to be recited ([*an*]*usmārayitavyaṃ*); forty-nine lamps are to be lighted; seven images are to be made; for each image seven lamps are to be set up; each lamp is to be made the size of the wheel of a cart. If on the forty-ninth day the light is not exhausted, forty-nine five-colored flags are to be (left standing (?). All the Mss. are here faulty)."[17]

We find a similar and equally detailed passage in the *Buddhabalādhānaprātihāryavikurvāṇanirdeśa-sūtra* (*'phags pa sangs rgyas kyi stobs bskyed pa'i cho 'phrul rnam par 'phrul ba bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 34, 193–2–3ff.).[18] Here, it is said that if someone, "for the benefit of those beings who have gone to the Avīci Hell, or have been born in the three unfortunate destinies, or for the sake of releasing friends and relatives, has painted images or images of clay of those Tathāgatas made [the Tathāgatas are listed earlier at 192–5–3, and include Bhaiṣajyaguru, Amitābha, Śikhin, Kāśyapa, etc.]; and having had them made also directs the most excellent thought of compassion towards all living beings, and having undertaken the eight-limbed worthy path (*'phags pa'i lam yan brgyad pa dang par gyur nas*), from the eighth day of the waxing moon until the fifteenth, three times a day and three times a night, does pūjā to those Tathāgatas with flowers, perfumes, etc. . . . and (if), for the sake of freeing those beings, he turns over (the resulting

merit), etc."—if he does all this then, the text says, "the names of those Tathāgatas would be heard by those then born in the Avīci Hell and the unfortunate destinies, and on account of this, and of copying, reading and worshipping this text," they, "having recollected their good and bad acts (i.e., the fruits thereof), afterwards would not perform an evil act. From that they would be freed from those sufferings and would go to a fortunate destiny (. . . *dge ba dang mi dge ba'i las rjes su dran par gyur nas phyis sdig pa'i las byed par mi 'gyur te/ de nas sdug bsngal de dag las yongs su grol bar 'gyur zhing bde 'gror 'gro bar 'gyur ro /*)."

These and similar passages clearly indicate that ritualized worship of a Buddha or Buddhas, frequenty directed towards sacred images or involving the recitation of a specific text, forms a distinct category of non-meditational activity which can be undertaken by all—monks, nuns, lay men and women—and which is stipulated to result in the obtainment of *jātismara*. Two further points, however, are worth noting here.

Hsüan-tsang, in the record of his travels in India, confirms the fact that we have to do here with an element of actual practice, or, rather, that ritual activity in regard to specific Buddha images was in practice actually connected with the potential obtainment of *jātismara*. He says in his account of Bodh-Gaya: "To the north-west of the Bodhi-tree in a *vihāra* is the image of Kāśyapa Buddha. It is noted for its miraculous and sacred qualities. From time to time it emits a glorious light: The old records say, that if a man actuated by sincere faith walks around it seven times, he obtains the power of knowing the place and condition of his (former) births."[19]

The second point to be noted is that the obtainment of *jātismara* is of particular importance for both the *Buddhabalādhānaprātihāryavikurvāṇanirdeśa* and, especially, the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*. It is, as a matter of fact, clear from both texts that in both cases the one essential reason for undertaking the ritual is to assure that the individual on whose behalf it is undertaken will obtain *jātismara* and—as we shall see—undergo the behavioral transformation that is held to be its inevitable consequence. This, in fact, is specifically stated in the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*. But since, in regard to the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*, the passage under discussion constitutes the central piece of the text and, by extension, of the cult of Bhaiṣajyaguru based on it, it would

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appear that the primary function of this figure, and the primary purpose of the cult devoted to him was to assure for a given individual the obtainment of *jātismara* and its concomitant behavioral change. This view is of course not in entire agreement with at least one recent view, which wants Bhaiṣajyaguru to be seen as a "Buddha of Healing."[20]

V. A Final Passage from the Suvarṇabhāsottama & the Obtainment of Jātismara Through a Second Kind of Non-meditational Activity: Acts Connected with Sacred Names

If the ritualized worship of Buddhas or Buddha images forms a distinct category of non-meditational acts that are stipulated to result in the obtainment of *jātismara*, it is by no means the only category of such acts. This is obvious, for example, from the fourth and final reference to *jātismara* in the *Suvarṇabhāsottama*. This reference occurs in the last sentence of what is now the ninth chapter of the text, "The Chapter on the Preservation of the Names of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas." This short chapter is, apart from the last line, entirely made up of a series of invocations to a series of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, in the form *namo bhagavato ratnaśikhinas tathāgatasya*, or some slight variation thereof. After this series of invocations, the chapter concludes with the stipulation that "who [that is to say 'anyone who'] preserves, recites, or attends to these names of the Tathāgatas and names of the Bodhisattvas from the *Suvarṇabhāsottama*, the King of the Best Sūtras, he will always have recollection of his former births (*sa nityaṃ jātismaro bhaviṣyati*)."[21]

Similar occurrences where the obtainment of *jātismara* is contingent on some activity connected with a Buddha's name can be seen in the *Kusumasaṃcaya-sūtra* (*'phags pa me tog gi tshogs shes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 37, 78–5–7ff) where it is said that "if a son or daughter of good family hears the name (*mtshan thos na*) of the Tathāgata Pad mo la bzhud pa"—one of the numerous Buddhas mentioned in the text—he, "having passed away, will come to have a beautiful and handsome form, and beings will delight in seeing him . . . and recalling to mind incalculable kalpas, as they really were, so he will fully know

them (*tshe 'phos nas gzugs bzang zhing mdzes pa dang / sems can rnams mthong na dga' ba dang / . . . bskal pa grangs med pa rjes su dran zhing yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du rab tu shes so /*)."

In yet another passage from the *Bhaiṣajyagūru-sūtra* it is said of those people who refuse to give gifts even when the occasion arises—clearly not religious virtuosos—that they, "having passed away from here, will be reborn in the world of the pretas or among animals. (But) by which of them, when formerly they were men, the name of that Blessed One Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabha, the Tathāgata, will have been heard, to them now dwelling in the world of Yama, or dwelling among animals, the name of that Tathāgata will (again) come to be present. Immediately, through (that name) being merely recalled, having passed away from there, they will once again be reborn among men, and they will have recollection of their former births (. . . *tatra teṣāṃ yamaloke sthitānāṃ vā tiryagyonau sthitānāṃ vā tasya tathāgatasya nāma āmukhībhaviṣyati saha smaritamātreṇa tataś cyutvā punar api manuṣyaloke upapatsyanti jātismarāś ca bhaviṣyanti*)."[22]

In the closely related *Saptatathāgatapūrvapraṇidhānaviśeṣavistarasūtra* (*'phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa bdun gyi sngon gyi smon lam gyi khyad par rgyas pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 6, 126–2–5ff.) there are, in addition to the two references to *jātismara* also found in the independent version of the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*, two further references. The first concerns the name of the Buddha Mya ngan med mchog dpal: "Mañjuśrī, who, hearing the name of the Blessed One Mya ngan med mchog dpal, recites it three times a day and three times a night, dwells in friendliness towards all beings, and worships that Tathāgata, of them all the obstructions due to past acts would be purified, they would be freed from all sorrow and suffering and anxiety and trouble; they would always be free of disease; living a long time, they would be free from all sickness; until the time that they attained awakening they would not undergo any downfall; they would recollect their former births, etc. (. . . *byang chub kyi mthar thug gi bar du log par lhung bar 'gro bar mi 'gyur / skye ba dran bar 'gyur /* etc., 129–5–5ff.)." A very similar passage, in which *jātismara*—among other things—results from "hearing, preserving, and having faith in" the name of the Buddha Chos

bsgrags rgya mtsho'i dbyangs, occurs later in the same text at 130–3–6.

In the *Ratnajāliparipṛcchā-sūtra* (*'phags pa rin chen dra ba can gyis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 33), as a part of the opening question of the text, Ratnajāli specifically asks who the Buddhas are through hearing the names of which a "son or daughter of good family" would—again, among other things—come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births (*tshe rabs dran pa dang yang ldan par 'gyur*, 240–2–7f.). Then, at 241–4–3, as one of the results which follow from "hearing" (*thos pa*) and "preserving" (*'dzin pa*) the name of one of the several Buddhas mentioned in the text we find: "Having seen the Illuminator of the World, he obtains immeasurable joy; while practicing the Bodhisattva-practice he will recollect his former existences (. . . *byang chub spyad pa spyod pa na / tshe rabs dag ni dran par 'gyur*)."

Similar passages in which the obtainment of *jātismara* is said to result from "hearing, preserving, and having faith in" the names of one or another Buddha are found once in the *Dvādaśabuddhaka-sūtra* (*'phags pa sangs rgyas bcu gnyis pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 37, 96–1–5); twice in the *Daśabuddhaka-sūtra* (*sangs rgyas bcu pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 37, 94–5–4, 5–5); and twelve times in the *Buddhamakuṭa-sūtra* (*'phags pa sangs rgyas kyi dbu rgyan zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 37, 96–5–7; 97–1–5, 2–6, 3–3, 4–6, 5–2; 98–1–6, 2–1, 3–1, 3–7, 4–6, and 5–4).

VI. The Obtainment of Jātismara Through a Third Kind of Non-meditational Activity: Acts Connected with Sacred Texts.

It is clear from these Mahāyāna texts that for them, unlike for the *Nikāya/Āgama* texts, *jātismara* was to be obtained not through meditational or yogic attainments, but through merit and merit-making activity, through at least two distinct categories of such activity—the ritualized worship of Buddhas, often directed towards images, and the hearing and preserving of the name of any of a long list of Buddhas—and that it could be obtained by anyone. It is equally clear from other passages that

there were at least two other categories of non-meditational religious activity that could produce the same result for the same category of individuals: acts connected with sacred texts, and acts connected with dhāraṇīs. In regard to the first of these additional categories, it can be noted that the activity concerned is occasionally directed towards the Dharma as a general category rather than to a specific text. This is the case, for example, in a verse from the *Subhāṣitaratnakaraṇḍakakathā* which Professor Zimmermann translates as:

> Wer in diesem Leben beharrlich das Juwel des Dharma niederschreibt, hört, (oder) unablässig darüber nach denkt—oder auch wenn ihm einer hohe Verehrung erweist,—der erlangt stets die Fähigkeit, sich (seiner früheren) Geburten zu erinnern [. . . *jātismaratvaṃ labhate sa nityam* /]."[23]

More typically, however, *jātismara* is said to result from "Copying, preserving or worshipping" a specific text. At *Buddhabalādhānaprātihāryavikurvāṇanirdeśa* (Pek. Vol. 34) 193–5–4ff., for example, it is said that "if someone worships or copies or has copied this discourse on Dharma they will obtain eight great benefits (*yon tan chen po*)," the last of which is "they are reborn in a place in accordance with their desire and they will recollect their former births (*ji ltar 'dod pa'i gnas su skye zhing tshe rabs dran par 'gyur ba ste*)."

At *Aparimitāyur-jñāna-sūtra* 23.8 we find it said that he "who will copy or will have copied this *Aparimitāyuḥ-sūtra*. . . is never reborn in the hells, will never be reborn among animals nor in the world of Yama; in whatsoever state he is reborn, he in every single birth has recollection of his former births (*yatra yatra janmany utpadyate sarvato jātau jātau jātismaro bhavati*)."[24] Virtually the same thing is said at *Kāraṇḍavyūha-sūtra* 278.32[25] of those who have the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* copied. In fact, earlier in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* we find that in regard to those who "hear, and having heard, copy, preserve and worship the text," "for them the five acts with immediate retribution will be exhausted; after having exhausted (these), they will come to be purified in body and have recollection of their former births (*teṣāṃ ca pañcānantaryāṇi karmāṇi kṣapayanti kṣapayitvā pariśuddhakāyā bhaviṣyanti jātismarāś ca*, 269.19)."

In the *Saṃghāṭa-sūtra* it is said first that he who will wholeheartedly honor (*adhyāśayena namaskariṣyati*) the *Saṃghāṭa-sūtra* "will in births for ninty-five aeons have recollection of his former births (*paṃcanavatikalpāṃ jātau jātismaro bhaviṣyati*)," and later that he who will hear the *Saṃghāṭa-sūtra* "will have recollection of his former births for eighty aeons (*yaṃ* [but Tib: *gang gi*] *saṃghāṭo dharmaparyāyaḥ śrotrāvabhāsam āgamiṣyati so 'śītiḥ kalpāṃ jātismaro* [so no. 36] *bhaviṣyati*)."[26]

In the *Tathāgatānām-buddhakṣetra-guṇokta-dharmaparyāya* (*'phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa rnams kyi sangs rgyas kyi zhing gi yon tan brjod pa'i chos kyi rnam grangs*, Pek. Vol. 28, 262–5–6), as a part of the concluding section of this short text it is said of those who "preserve, retain, read, study, and teach this text to others" that at the moment of their death innumerable Buddhas will appear before them, and that "until they fully awaken to utmost, right, and perfect awakening, they will recollect their former births (*bla ma med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas kyi bar du skye* [so Lhasa, Vol. 50, 255–1–1; Pek.: *sde*] *ba dran par 'gyur ro* /)."

In addition to the texts already cited, at least three of the "shorter" *Prajñāpāramitā* texts also contain references to *jātismara*. In the *Prajñāpāramitā-Vajrapāṇi-sūtra* (*'phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa lag na rdo rje'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 21, 259–2–4) it is said that one who preserves this Perfection of Wisdom (*su zhig shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'di 'dzin par byed na*), will remember his former births (*de skye ba dran par 'gyur ro*). In the *Adhyardhaśatika Prajñāpāramitā* we find it said that "he who carries this discourse on Dharma within himself, or (by whom), after being written in a book, it is circulated, that man becomes an object to be honored. He for many millions of aeons will remember his births (*chos kyi rnams grangs 'di gang gi lus la thogs sam /glegs bam la bris te spyod pa'i gang zag de phyag bya ba'i gnas su 'gyur ro / de bskal pa bye ba mang por skye ba dran par 'gyur ro*).[27] Finally, there are two references to *jātismara* in the somewhat redundant concluding paragraph of the *Āryaprajñāpāramitā nāma aṣṭaśatakā*, both of which appear to have been misunderstood by its translator. The paragraph should probably be translated as follows: "If this Perfection of Wisdom is preserved, the Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines will be preserved. Through reciting it continually (*rtag tu*

bzlas brjod bas na), all the obstructions due to one's actions would be purified. After having passed away from here, he would also come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births, attentiveness, and matchless wisdom (*'di nas shi 'phos nas kyang skye ba dran pa / yid gzhungs shing shes rab mtshungs pa med par 'gyur /*). He would preserve without exception the Dharma of all the Tathāgatas of the three periods of time. He would also preserve all the mantras and *vidyās*. Having passed away from here, he would also come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births, attentiveness and great wisdom (*'di nas shi phos nas kyang / skye ba dran pa dang / yid bzhungs shing shes rab chen por 'gyur ro*).[28]

One further point in reference to passages of this kind might also be noted. If these passages make it clear that for the authors or compliers of a considerable number of Mahāyāna sūtras the obtainment of *jātismara* was for some reason held to be of considerable religious significance, and that merit-making activity in regard to the Dharma or one or another specific *dharmaparyāya*—copying, retaining, reciting, etc.—was an important means for its obtainment, it is equally true that the same can be said for some of the most prominent "Doctors of the Church." This at least can be demonstrated for Asaṅga or Maitreyanātha, whichever was the author of the *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra*, and for Nāgārjuna, or whoever was the author of the *Ratnāvalī*. In the *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra* it is said: "Who would undertake the preservation of only two verses (of the Dharma), whether in regard to the words or their meaning, he indeed obtains ten kinds of blessings (*yo granthato 'rthato vā gāthādvayadhāraṇe prayujyeta / sa hi daśavidham anuśaṃsaṃ. . .*)"; he will have—among other things—"the most elevated joy at the moment of death; a state of rebirth in accordance with his desire; and everywhere the recollection of his former births (. . . *prāmodyaṃ cottamaṃ maraṇakāle / janma ca yathābhikāmaṃ jātismaratāṃ ca sarvatra*)."[29] A passage of similar purport is found in the *Ratnāvalī* (*rgyal po la gtam bya ba rin po che'i phreng ba*, Pek. Vol. 129, 179–3–3 = Ch. III, vs. 296) which, at least from the time of Candrakīrti, has been ascribed to Nāgārjuna. That such passages continued to be relevant to the scholastic tradition can also be surmised from the fact that many centuries later Buston cites both passages with approval.[30]

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VII. The Obtainment of Jātismara Through a Fourth Kind of Non-meditational Activity: Acts Connected with Dhāraṇīs.

A fourth and final distinct category of non-meditational activity held to result in the obtainment of *jātismara* consists of acts connected with dhāraṇīs, acts which, to a large degree, are the same as those to be undertaken in regard to the Dharma, or to one or another specific text: reciting, copying, etc. Typical of the passages of this kind is the *Sitātapatra-dhāraṇī* where it is said that "he who, after copying this dhāraṇī, will preserve it, will—for as long as he lives—not be threatened by poison, the sword, floods, etc. . . and he will have recollection of his former births for eighty-four thousand great aeons (. . . *caturaśītīnāṃ mahākalpasahasrāṇi jātismarau bhaviṣyate*)."[31]

Likewise, in the *Nārāyaṇaparipṛcchā*, it is said that "by whom-so-ever this dhāraṇī would be recited three times every day, whether it be by one who is purified or not purified. . . , he, indeed, having exhausted his accumulation of evil, even the five acts with immediate retribution, obtains an accumulation of merit and will be possessed of the recollection of his former births. Everywhere among beings he enjoys extensive wealth, delights in good practices, and is not one of those who falls into error and bad practices (. . . *bsod nams kyi phung po thob cing skye ba drang par 'gyur ro / sems can thams cad kun tu khyab pa'i nor la nge bar longs spyod cing dge ba'i chos rnams la mngon par dga' ste mi dge ba log par ltung ba rnams la ni ma yin no /*)."[32]

In the *Saptabuddhaka-sūtra* (*'phags pa sangs rgyas bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 37, 90–1–1), a short text in which each of the six *mānuṣaka* Buddhas, through Śākyamuni's power, appears in the sky and gives a *vidyā* (*rig sngags*) or *mantrapada* (*gsang sngags kyi gzhi*) for the "benefit" of all beings, we read in reference to the mantra given by the Buddha Krakucchanda: "If, taking up and preserving (this mantra), one fixes it well in mind, and if in the last period a monk or nun or lay man or woman, having then obtained faith in the three jewels, and bathing, having worshipped the Blessed One with flowers and incense and perfume, would recite this mantra one hundred and eight times, he (or she) would obtain the recollection of his former births for seven births; among devas he (or she) would obtain the exhalted state of a deva, etc. (. . . / *tshe rabs bdun du*

tshe rabs dran par 'gyur ro / lha rnams kyi nang du lha'i che ba nyid thob par 'gyur ro /)."

In addition to dhāraṇī-texts of this kind, an identifiable sub-group of dhāraṇī-sūtras, which I have superficially treated elsewhere,[33] makes frequent reference to the obtainment of *jātismara*. The texts belonging to this sub-group all deal primarily—and with greater or lesser degrees of elaboration—with the practice of copying dhāraṇīs and depositing them in stūpas, frequently in "miniature" stūpas. The *Mchod rten gcig btab na bye ba btab par 'gyur pa'i gzungs* (Pek. Vol. 11, 168–5–7), the Sanskrit title of which appears not to have survived, is characteristic of these texts and their view regarding the obtainment of *jātismara* when it says: "If one would follow thus the method [just described], by making [perhaps better: 'by casting,' as in clay] a (single) caitya, he would make ten million. Everywhere he would obtain recollection of his former births (*cho ga de ltar byas na tsai tya btab pas bye ba btab par 'gyur ro / thams cad du skye ba dran par 'gyur/*). A very similar passage also occurs in the concluding verses of the *Sarvaprajñāntapāramitāsiddhicaitya-dhāraṇī* (*shes pas thams cad mthar phyin par grub pa'i mchod rten zhes bya ba'i gzungs,* Pek. Vol. 11, 117–3–6).

Equally characteristic is a passage from the *Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣālaṃkāra-dhāraṇī* (*byang chub snying po'i rgyan 'bum zhes bya ba'i gzungs,* Lhasa, rgyud Ta 495a), where the Blessed One says "this dhāraṇī causes all acts to succeed . . . causes all evil and obstructions to be exhausted. . . . If someone, after having bathed and put on new, clean garments, were to recite it a hundred and eight times each day, he would see the face of all Tathāgatas; he would live a hundred years; for a long time all sickness would be avoided . . . in all births he would have recollection of his former births (*skye ba thams cad du tshe rabs dran par 'gyur ro*).

Likewise, in the *Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsasarvatathāgatahṛdayasamayavilokate-dhāraṇī* (*kun nas sgor 'jug pa'i 'od zer gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi snying po dang dam tshig la rnam par lta ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs,* Pek. Vol. 11, 228–1–7) we find: "thus, in the last time, in the last period, a son or daughter of good family, or a monk or nun, or lay man or woman should call to mind this *vidyā* of the mantra once (*rig sngags kyi rgyal mo 'di dus gcig tu dran par*

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bya'o). A stūpa having a relic chamber or a Tathāgata relic chamber is to be circumambulated. Both the wish-fulfilling gems [i.e. the two dhāraṇīs given previously] are also to be called to mind once. Through that he would produce roots of merit under Tathāgatas as numerous as the sands of hundreds of millions of Ganges Rivers; he would be possessed of great merit; the obstructions due to past acts having immediate retribution would also be purified; he would be freed from the unfortunate destinies, from the hells, birth among animals, and the world of Yama . . . in all his births he would have recollection of his former births (*tshe rabs thams cad du tshe rabs dran par 'gyur ro*)."

Similar passages are also found on two other occasions in the *Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsa* (Pek. Vol. 11, 227–5–4; 228–3–7), and three times in the similar *Raśmivimalavi-śuddhaprabhādhāraṇī* (*'phags pa 'od zer dri ma med pa rnam par dag pa'i 'od ces bya ba'i gzungs,* Pek. Vol. 7, 189–5–1; 190–5–1; 192–4–5).

VIII. The Obtainment of Jātismara as an Element of Sūtra Narratives.

One further kind of passage connected with the obtainment of *jātismara* deserves some mention. In passages of this kind the obtainment of *jātismara* occurs as a narrative element, as an element of various "frame-stories" that enclose the body of a given text, or as a part of an illustrative "story of a past time." Frequently, then, it will occur as a part of the introduction or conclusion of a text. Typical of this kind of passage is the conclusion to the *Ratnajālipariprcchā*. There, when the Buddha finishes delivering the "sūtra," the earth—in typical narrative fashion—quakes and, the text says, hundreds of millions of devas, having saluted with their heads the feet of the Blessed One, "recollected many hundreds of millions of their former states (*gnas bye ba khrag khrig 'bum phrag du ma dag rjes su dran no,* Pek. Vol. 33, 244–4–1)"; and, a little later: "a full hundred thousand ten millions of men worshipped the incomparable, excellent Jina; recollecting hundreds of their former states, they saluted with their heads the utmost excellent Muni (*mi ni bye ba 'bum tham pa / rgyal mchog zla med pa la mchod sngon gyi gnas*

brgya rjes dran zhing / thub mchog bla med mgos phyag 'tshal, 244–4–5)."

Equally typical is a passage found at the beginning of the *Ratnaketuparivarta*, yet another text found at Gilgit. Here, it is said that as a result of the light (*prabhā*) shot forth from the Buddha's body, "many billions of millions of hundreds of thousands of those born in the hells, or among animals, or in the world of Yama obtained recollection. After having recollectd the roots of merit they had formerly planted, having made the '*namo buddhāya*,' having passed away from those unfortunate states, they were reborn among devas (*bahūni ca nairayikatairyagyonikayamalaukikākṣobhyakoṭīśatasahasrāṇi smṛtiṃ pratilabhire pūrvāvaropitakuśala(mūlam) anusmṛtya namo buddhāyeti kṛtvā tebhyo 'pāyebhyaś cavitvā deveṣūpapannāḥ*)."[34]

A similar passage also occurs in the long and elaborate *nidāna* of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*. Here, when the Buddha enters into a samādhi called "The Lions Play," the earth quakes in six ways and, the text says, "thereupon, at that moment, minute, and second, in this great trichiliocosm the hells, and the animal world, and the world of Yama, all were abolished and became empty, and all the places of untoward rebirth disappeared. And the beings who had deceased in these destinies. . . all, through their joy and rejoicing, were reborn among men, and also among the six kinds of gods (of the realm of sense desire). Thereupon, these men and gods, through the very might of the Lord, recalled their former lives. In their great joy and rejoicing they then approached the Lord, saluted his feet with their heads, raised their folded hands to the Lord and paid homage to him, etc."[35]

Of a somewhat different kind is the reference to *jātismara* that occurs as a part of a "narrative of the past" in the *Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsa*. Here, the Buddha, in recounting the past lives of a particular deva, says that the deva, as a wealthy householder, had had murderous thoughts in regard to a brahmin who recited and taught this dhāraṇī. As soon as these thoughts arose, he became ill, and suffered greatly until he died. He then underwent a long series of rebirths in the hells and among animals, finally being reborn as a blind man. As that blind man he encountered a monk, and that monk "having seen him, being filled with compassion, gave him food.

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He also recited this dhāraṇī for him. The blind man heard this dhāraṇī, and having become (as a rēsult) possessed of the recollection of his former lives, remembered the brahmin (*rig sngags kyi rgyal mo 'di yang bsgrags so / dmus longs des gzungs sngags 'di thos pa dang tshe rabs dran par gyur nas bram ze de yang dran te*, Pek. Vol. 11, 227–5–4)." Note that the Chinese text corresponding to the last sentence of this passage has been translated by Chavannes as "lorsque (l'aveugle) eut pu l'entendre, il y fit grande attention et y appliqua sa pensée. Alors dans cette naissance il obtint la compréhension de ses anciennes destinées et il put réfléchir à ce qui était leur origine."[36]

These and similar passages are of interest because they indicate that a number of the ideas concerning the obtainment of *jātismara* that we have seen previously only as doctrinal assertions were sufficiently well-established so that on occasion they could be, and were, used simply as narrative elements. The conclusion of the *Ratnajālipariprcchā*, for example, no longer asserts that hearing a particular text results in the obtainment of *jātismara*; instead, this idea is narratively expressed as a fact: the obtainment of *jātismara* occurs as an accepted and unquestioned part of the series of events that follow after the "congregation" has heard a particular text, just delivered by the Buddha.

IX. The Historical Context of Our Texts and the Ideas They Express: Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature.

We have looked now at a considerable number of Mahāyāna sūtras, but before we try to summarize what they tell us about ideas concerning the obtainment of *jātismara*, and before we attempt to formulate any conclusions, it might be well to try to place our texts in something like a historical context. We need not, I think, be concerned here with absolute chronology, nor the date of composition. The latter, in fact, is rarely the real question. The important point is not when a text was composed, but when it was read or used or circulated, and the two are not necessarily, or even frequently, the same. What we want to do, then, is attempt to establish the period during which the ideas concerning the obtainment of *jātismara* found in our texts

were actually available, widely circulated, and an established part of the Indian Buddhist context—when, in short, the ideas and the texts that express them had some chance of influencing actual behavior. In this regard, of course, the references to the obtainment of *jātismara* in specifically "authored" works are of some importance: they indicate when some of our ideas had penetrated at least one segment of the Indian Buddhist community.

We may note, then, that if Nāgārjuna was the author of the *Ratnāvalī*, and if he lived in the second half of the second century A.D., then the idea that *jātismara* could be obtained through non-meditational acts directed toward the Dharma—hearing, preserving, etc.—was already accepted at this time, at least among Buddhist scholastics.[37] Again, if the *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra* is the work of Asaṅga or Maitreyanātha, and if these authors actually lived during the 3rd/4th Century A.D., then we can say that this same idea continued to be current among scholastics for another two centuries.[38] In regard to the sūtra literature, it should be noted that apart from the *Samādhirāja*, the *Pratyutpanna*, and perhaps the *Upāliparipṛcchā*, probably none of the texts we have cited is so early. Note, too, that the *Samādhirāja* and the *Pratyutpanna* are notable for their continuation of the old ideas concerning the obtainment of *jātismara*, and are therefore quite distinct from the majority of our texts. The bulk of our evidence, in fact, would seem to indicate that the period of widest currency for both our ideas and the texts expressing them was somewhat later.

The passage quoted above from Hsüan-tsang establishes the fact that the idea that *jātismara* could be obtained as a result of activity undertaken in regard to sacred images was current in the 7th century at one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in India. The passages from Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatara* would seem to indicate that related ideas were firmly established and actually acted on by at least one prominent scholastic at roughly the same time.[39] We also know that at least eight of our texts—from which a considerable number of our passages were taken—were all available in the 6th/7th century at Gilgit: the *Bhaiṣajyaguru, Buddhabalādhāna, Kāraṇḍavyūha, Saṃghāṭa, Tathāgatabimbakārāpaṇa, Ratnaketuparivarta, Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, and the *Samādhirāja*, and some of these were available there in

several different manuscripts.[40] We also know that all three of the "shorter" *Prajñāpāramitā* texts that we have cited have been assigned by Professor Conze to a period falling between the 6th and 12th centuries[41]; that two of our texts, the *Aparimitāyurjñāna* and *Sitātapatra* were—to judge by the number of extant manuscripts—extremely popular in Central Asia, Khotan, and Tun-huang from the 8th century on[42]; that the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* too was well known in Central Asia in Sanskrit, Khotanese, and Uigur versions at roughly the same time[43]; and that the *Subhāṣitaratnakaraṇḍakakathā*, though ascribed to Āryaśūra, probably came into existence "between Śāntideva and the eleventh century."[44] Finally, we can note that Indian inscriptions testify to the presence of at least two of our texts in several places beginning from the 10th century and probably somewhat earlier: an extract from the *Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣālaṃkāradhāraṇī* occurs—as I will show in some detail in a future paper—in the Cuttack Museum Stone Inscription and on at least two of the hundreds of terracotta tablets found at Nālandā; and one of the dhāraṇīs from the *Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsa*—again as I will show in the future—is found on "seals" or terracotta tablets or strips of birchbark, at Paharpur, Bodh-Gayā, Nālandā, Gilgit, and Tikse in western Tibet; the *Samantamukhapraveśa* is also "le sūtra de la paroi occidentale de l'inscription de Kiu-yong koan."[45]

It would appear, then, that we are dealing with both ideas and texts that were current and were being used or acted upon during a period extending from the 5th/6th century to the 12th century and even later, even though there are indications that some forms of the ideas may have been older—for example those expressed by Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga/Maitreyanatha. It is in this sense that I would characterize our texts as a whole as typical of "current" medieval Mahāyāna sūtra literature.

Incidentally, it might also be noted that the dates of the Chinese translations of our texts support what we can know from other sources. The *Dvādaśabuddhaka*, for example, was translated first in the 6th/7th century (T.1348), and again in the 8th (T.1349); the *Buddhamakuṭa* was translated in the 11th century (T.438), the *Saptabuddhaka* twice in the 6th (T.1333, 1334) and once in the 10th century; the *Raśmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā* was translated in the 7th century (T.1024); etc.[46]

X. *A Summary of the Shifts in Ideas Concerning the Obtainment of Jātismara.*

Having established the approximate period during which our texts appear to have circulated, we might summarize what they can tell us. If we move from the passages studied earlier by Demiéville to those we have looked at in what we have called medieval Mahāyāna sūtra literature, we can, I think—putting aside the passages from the *Pratyutpanna* and the *Samādhirāja sūtras*—see that a distinct and fundamental shift has taken place in the latter in regard to *jātismara* and its obtainment. This shift, in fact, involves a number of specific factors.

In the *Nikāya/Āgama* literature studied by Demiéville, *jātismara* usually occurs as only one item in at least three stereotyped lists—the *vidyās, abhijñās, balas*, or, at least, in close association with one or more of the other items in these lists. Moreover, it was attributed almost exclusively to the religious virtuoso, and it appears to have been thought to have been attainable only by means of sophisticated forms of meditational or yogic practice. In the Mahāyāna sūtra literature we have examined, the situation is different on all three counts. Here, *jātismara* has become completely disassociated from the traditional lists of *abhijñās, balas*, etc., and occurs almost always as an independent item, without reference to its earlier associates.[47] Moreover, these texts make it abundantly clear that, far from being restricted to the religious virtuoso, it is here within the reach of virtually everyone: monks, nuns, lay men and women—or simply men or women—brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śudras, and those reborn in the hells or other unfortunate destinies. Perhaps the most significant shift, however, concerns the means by which *jātismara* was thought to be obtainable. First of all, it is clear from a number of texts that the authors or compilers of some Mahāyāna sūtras held that the obtainment of *jātismara* by the individual could be effected by agents external to him—by a Bodhisattva working for the sake of "maturing" beings (*Upāliparipṛcchā*), by other individuals undertaking specific ritual or merit-making activity on his behalf, etc. (*III* & *IV*). This, of course, marks a major transformation of the "original" concept. But this is not all. Even in regard to the means by which the individual can obtain *jātismara* for himself there has

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been a clearly observable shift. Rather than by sophisticated meditational technique, the province in fact of the ascetic few, in Mahāyāna sūtra literature current in the medieval period, *jātismara* was available by means of a variety of non-meditational activities: ritualized acts of worship, often directed towards sacred images (*IV*); activity connected with sacred names—hearing, reciting, etc.(*V*); activity connected with sacred texts—reciting, copying, preserving, worshipping, etc. (*VI*); and activity connected with dhāraṇīs—reciting, copying, preserving, and depositing in stūpas, etc. (*VII*).

It is interesting to note that what we see here happening to the idea of the obtainment of *jātismara* is almost exactly the same sort of thing that happened to the idea of rebirth in Sukhāvatī in virtually the same literature: a specialized attainment associated with a specific group and attainable through limited and specialized means has been transformed into a generalized "benefit" open to all and available through a broad range of basic religious activities.[48] This process—which I would call generalization—appears in fact to be one of the most characteristic elements of that "movement" we now call "the Mahāyāna." It is not only the idea of *jātismara* and the idea of rebirth in Sukhāvatī that have been reshaped by this characteristic process; but a whole series of basic religious concepts have been transformed in exactly the same way: the idea of *avaivartikatā* and the idea of the attainment of Buddhahood itself are just two notable examples that have yet to be systematically studied from this point of view. When applied to ascetic ideas or practices of the religious virtuoso, this process effects what might be described as the "domestication" of radical asceticism or the "democratization" of "elitist" attainments—these are in fact only two aspects of a single phenomenon. In any case, this process always involves the movement away from specialization of ideals and group-specific attainments. It is particularly worth noting that this includes, of course, the movement away from specifically associating ideals or practices with either the monastic community or the lay community. Although the current tendency is to take the kind of texts we have cited as "popular," if we limit ourselves to the material we have collected here we would, for example, have to conclude that the generalization of *jātismara* appeared first among learned monks—Nāgārjuna,

Asaṅga, or Maitreyanātha. Moreover, the passages from Śāntideva clearly indicate that the obtainment of *jātismara* through merit-making activity continued to be a "monastic" ideal, held to and acted upon by learned monks. It should be clear, then, that we are not here dealing with a "lay" or "popular" phenomenon—if by "lay" or "popular" we intend something distinct from "monastic." These and other considerations confirm from yet another point of view that the distinction between "lay" and "monastic" is simply not a useful one—and almost certainly not a real one—in most of Indian Buddhism.[49]

There is one further consideration here. The process of the generalization of group-specific ideals and attainments was undoubtedly related to other changes that occurred in the ongoing process of the development of Indian Buddhism and, I think, our passages can tell us a little more in regard to some of these other changes, as well.

First, we should note that the obtainment of *jātismara*—like rebirth in Sukhāvatī—occurs over and over again in more or less standardized lists of "blessings" or "benefits" stipulated to follow from a wide variety of merit-making activity. In addition to the obtainment of *jātismara* and rebirth in Sukhāvatī, such lists also promise freedom from sickness (*Suvarṇabhāsottama, Saptatathāgatapūrvapraṇidhāna, Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣa*), avoidance of rebirth in the hells or other unfortunate destinies (*Suvarṇabhāsottama, Saptatathāgatapūrvapraṇidhāna, Aparimitāyur-jñāna, Kāraṇḍavyūha, Samantamukhapraveśa*), a favorable rebirth (*Saṃghāṭa, Buddhabalādhāna, Saptabuddhaka*), an auspicious death (*Tathāgatānām-buddhakṣetraguṇokta, Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra*), the "purification" or "exhaustion" of the obstructions due to past karma (*Saptatathāgatapūrvapraṇidhāna, Kāraṇḍavyūha, Nārāyaṇaparipṛcchā, Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣa, Samantamukhapraveśa, Prajñāpāramitā nāma aṣṭaśatakā*), etc., and these lists occur almost everywhere, not just in medieval, but in early Mahāyāna sūtra literature as well. The sheer bulk of the references, the fact that these lists occur everywhere and in all periods, suggests that we are dealing with real and active concerns of both those who wrote these texts—whatever else they might say—and those who listened to them. The connection of the obtainment of *jātismara* with these other concerns—the concern for a favorable rebirth, the concern with the avoidance of rebirth in the

hells, etc.—may not at first sight be self-evident, but a closer look at some of our passages will, I think, indicate that it is intimately related to the basic problem that appears to lie behind all these lists.

XI. The Significance of the Obtainment of Jātismara for the Religious Life of the Individual in Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature.

Professor Demiéville has already shown that in the literature he surveyed the "value" of *jātismara* was not constant. "Chez les religieux non bouddhistes," for example, it could and did—according to the *Brahmajāla-sutta*—serve as the fundamental basis for the affirmation of "l'éternité du moi et du monde." In the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, on the other hand, ". . . se trouve spécifié," according to Demiéville, "ce que les bouddhistes retirent de la contemplation de leurs existences antérieures: c'est le dégout de l'impermanence." A little further on, however, he notes that "d'après le *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-çāstra* de Nāgārjuna . . . la notion abstraite dégagée par les bouddhistes de la mémoire des existences antérieures est celle de la causalité; le *Mahāvibhāṣā* en fait aussi une des conséquences de cette mémoire. . . ."[50]

Putting aside the conflicting character of the conclusions drawn, it still is clear that all these passages want above all to extract from *jātismara* a "notion abstraite," and that its primary significance here lies in the fact that it functions to confirm and legitimate a given doctrinal position. But, as we shall see, the significance attached to *jātismara* in the Mahāyāna sūtra literature we have examined appears to be of a fundamentally different sort.

There are in our sample several passages in which the effects of *jātismara* are specifically stated. As we have seen, the *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra* says of the individual on whose behalf the pūjā to Bhaiṣajyaguru has been undertaken that as a result, in the final instance, he would be reborn and—significantly—"he would obtain recollection; he himself is then a direct witness to (the effects of) merit, demerit, and the results of his (past) actions." But the text then immediately adds: "(As a consequence,) even for the sake of his life he does not do an evil

deed. For that reason, by a believing son or daughter of good family pūjā is to be performed to that Tathāgata (. . . *smṛtim upalabhet; so kuśalam akuśalaṃ karmavipākaṃ svayam eva pratyakṣo bhavati. jīvitahetor api pāpaṃ karma na karoti. tasmāc chrāddhena kulaputreṇa vā kuladuhitrā vā tasya tathāgatasya pūjā kartavyāḥ*).[51] Note here that for this text, at least, the significance of the obtainment of *jātismara* is, apparently, behavioral: *jātismara* effects a restructuring of the individual's behavior. Having become "a direct witness to the effects of his acts," he will behave in a certain way: "he will not do evil even for the sake of his life." Note too that the behavioral transformation that takes place appears to be the sole reason for which the pūjā is undertaken. This is at least the case if we take—as it appears we must—the final statement (*tasmāc,* "for that reason") as referring to that which immediately precedes it: *pāpaṃ karma na karoti.*

Elsewhere, the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* says that those reborn in the hells through greed and stinginess will—through the agency of the Buddha's name—once again be reborn among men, and "they will have recollection of their former births." But here too the text immediately adds: "Terrified by the fear of an unfortunate destiny, no longer seeking for the objects of desire, delighted in the act of giving . . . renouncing all their property, in due order they will present to beggars their head or hands or feet or eyes . . . how much more other accumulations of material goods (*punar api manuṣyaloke upapatsyanti, jātismaraś ca bhaviṣyanti. durgatibhayabhītā na bhūyaḥ kāmaguṇair arthikā,* etc. . .)."[52] Note here that once again the obtainment of *jātismara* effects above all else a radical restructuring of behavior. Note too that the behavioral change effected by *jātismara* is particularly clear in this passage.

Buddhabalādhānaprātihārya (Pek. Vol. 34, 193–2–3) says of the individuals reborn in the hells on whose behalf a pūjā directed towards any of several Buddhas is undertaken that, as a result, "having recollected their good and bad acts (i.e., the fruits thereof), they afterwards (*phyis*) would not perform an evil act. From that they would be freed from those sufferings and would go to a fortunate destiny. Until they fully and completely awaken to utmost, right, and perfect awakening they would conform to this practice (. . . *sangs ma rgyas kyi bar du spyod*

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pa 'thun par 'gyur ro)." A little later, the same text repeats the same thing in verse: . . . *dge ba'i gnas su skye ba 'dzin par gyur / sngon gyi las rnams rjes su dran 'gyur zhing / dran nas mkhas pa sdig pa byed mi 'gyur /* (194–2–2): "They would take rebirth in an auspicious place, and they would recollect their past acts. Having remembered that, the wise would not do evil."

In the *Ratnaketuparivarta,* as we have seen, through the "light" emitted by the Buddha countless beings born in the hells and among animals obtained recollection and "after having recollected the roots of merit which they had formerly planted, having made the *'namo buddhāya,'* having passed away from those unfortunate states, they were reborn among devas." In the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā,* in a similar passage, the recollection of their past lives on the part of those who had formerly been reborn in the hells and other unfortunate destinies had a similar effect: "Thereupon, these men and gods. . .recalled their former lives. In their great joy and rejoicing they then approached the Lord, saluted his feet with their heads, raised their folded hands to the Lord and paid homage to him, etc."[53]

Finally, in the *Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsa,* as we have seen, a man who had had murderous thoughts in regard to a brahmin who taught this dhāraṇī sickened and died and had to undergo a long series of rebirths in the hells and among animals. Finally reborn as a blind man, he encountered a monk who out of compassion recited the dhāraṇī for him. "The blind man"—the text says—"heard this dhāraṇī, and having become possessed of the recollection of his former lives, remembered the brahmin." But then it immediately adds: *rjes su sems shing kye ma'o mi bzad pa'i las byas so snyam nas ngo tsha dang / khrel yod par gyur te / 'chi ba'i dus byas pa dang gzungs sngags 'di'i mthus sum bcu rtsa gsum pa'i lha'i nang du skyes te,* etc. (Pek. Vol. 11, 227–5–5): "Reflecting on that, having thought 'Ah! I have done a dreadful thing,' he was ashamed and remorseful, and passing away then, through the power of this dhāraṇī (i.e., what it effected) he was reborn among the devas of the thirty-three, etc."

We can note two things about all these passages. First, *jātismara* is specifically stated to effect in every case a radical alteration in behavior, attitude, or both: having recollected his former births, the individual would not perform an evil deed even

for the sake of his life (*Bhaiṣajyaguru, Buddhabalādhāna*), or else he would undertake religious activity: he would give gifts (*Bhaiṣajyaguru*), perform homage to the Buddha (*Ratnaketu, Pañcaviṃśati*) or acknowledge his wrong doing and feel shame and remorse (*Samantamukhapraveśa*). In every case, the behavior or state of mind that follows the recollection of former births is either implicitly or explicitly stated to be in sharp contrast with the behavior that preceded it. Secondly, the obtainment of *jātismara* in all these texts takes place either in or in reference to a rebirth in the hells or one of the other unfortunate destinies and—importantly—the behavioral or attitudinal alteration effected by *jātismara* effects in turn a change in the individual's position in regard either to his present or his potential future rebirth in such a state. In the *Ratnaketu*, the obtainment of *jātismara* takes place in the hells and its associated behavioral change effects the individual's release and his progression to a more favorable state. Much the same holds for the *Samantamukhapraveśa*, except that there the attitudinal change effected by *jātismara* effects the individual's release from an unfortunate human rebirth. In the *Buddhabalādhāna*, the obtainment of *jātismara* again takes place in the hells, but here its concomitant behavioral change effects, first, the individual's release from the hells and his movement to a better state, and, secondly, a restructuring of his behavior in such a way that he avoids a repetition of his former fate. In both passages from the *Bhaiṣajyaguru* and in the *Pañcaviṃśati*, finally, the obtainment of *jātismara* and the consequent behavioral change take place after the individual has undergone his "judgement" or unfortunate rebirth, but in specific reference to it. They here function, then, primarily as a solution to the problem of the future avoidance of an unfortunate rebirth—direct knowledge of his former unpleasant fate effects a restructuring of the individual's behavior in such a way that he would avoid a repetition of that fate.

It should be clear from all of this that in our texts the significance of the obtainment of *jātismara* appears to have been conceived of primarily in terms of the fact that it could or did effect not—as in the texts studied by Demiéville—the confirmation of a given doctrinal position, but a radical restructuring of behavior and attitude in the individual concerned, and—importantly—the release from, or avoidance of, rebirth in the hells and other unfortunate destinies. It is, indeed, the latter function, above all else, that appears to lie behind and explain the fact that the obtainment of *jātismara* had come to be offered as a generalized reward for religious activity in Mahāyāna sūtra literature.

XII. The Obtainment of Jātismara in a Larger Context: A Suggestion Concerning the Dysfunctionality of the Doctrine of Karma.

We might finish here with one further and final observation of a more general kind. All the passages we have just examined begin with individuals either actually reborn in the hells or other unfortunate destinies, or with individuals who are about to be reborn there. This would seem to indicate that for these texts, at least, the primary concern was the individual reborn in the hells or other unfortunate destinies, and how his release from, or future avoidance of, such a state could be effected. Although the fact has not yet been fully realized, this appears to have been a fundamental problem in much of Mahāyāna sūtra literature. Unless I am very much mistaken, all the "benefits" or "blessings" said to follow from merit-making activity are offered as "solutions" to this same problem: the promise of the avoidance of an unfortunate rebirth certainly, but also the promise of a good rebirth, or rebirth in Sukhāvatī, of the removal of the "obstructions due to karma," of an auspicious death, etc. Lists of these and other related "benefits" occur, as I have already said, almost everywhere and in all periods of Mahāyāna sūtra literature. But the emergence of rebirth in the hells as a serious religious problem and major preoccupation is, in turn, almost certainly connected with yet another factor not yet sufficiently acknowledged.

Many scholars, beginning with Max Weber, have said that theoretically the doctrine of karma as it is presented in early Buddhist literature is one of the most complete and satisfying theodicies in the history of religions. And this may be—*theoretically*—true. What Weber and others after him have not noted, however, is that the doctrine of karma appears—*in fact*—to have created as many problems as it solved. Its acceptance at a

formative stage appears to have laid the foundations for some fundamental and far-reaching problems that only gradually became apparent.[54] If, for example, the "logic" of karma gave a satisfying answer for the visible disparities among men, if it provided a complete solution for the problem of suffering, the very "completeness" of the solution became in its turn a serious problem. That same "solution" *in fact* inadvertently gave an almost equally complete assurance that the average man, the non-virtuoso, whether layman or monk, could, by virtue of his necessarily imperfect daily life, look forward to rebirth in the hells or other unfortunate destinies: *every* act must be paid for and "ni dans le royaume de l'air, ni dans le milieu de la mer, ni si tu t'enfonces dans le creux des montagnes, nulle part tu ne trouves sur la terre un lieu où tu puisses échapper au fruit de tes mauvaises actions."[55] This, of course, is bad enough, but once an individual was born into an unfortunate rebirth, that same "logic" made it very difficult to explain how he could ever escape from it, since such unfortunate rebirths placed the individual in situations that appeared to allow no opportunity for making merit and every opportunity to accumulate further demerit. La Vallée Poussin, referring to *Bodhicaryāvatara* IV. 17–20 "et surtout 22," has noted that "les damnés, par example, sont incapables d'une bonne pensée, et leur péché ne fait que s'accroître par ses propres forces."[56] The basic idea here had already been much more fully expressed in passages like *Majjhima-nikāya* iii 169.9, where the Buddha, using a simile found throughout Buddhist literature, is made to say:

> "Suppose, Monks, that a man were to throw a yoke with one hole into the ocean and it would be blown around in all directions by the wind. Suppose, too, there were a blind turtle who came to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, Monks? Would that blind turtle ever manage to stick his neck through the hole in that yoke?"
>
> "If at all, O Blessed One, it could happen only once in an extremely long while."
>
> "Sooner or later, Monks, that blind turtle might manage to push his neck through that hole. But, Monks, I say that it is even more difficult than that for a fool who has fallen into an unfortunate birth again to obtain rebirth as a human (. . . *ato dullabhatarāhaṃ bhikkhave manussattaṃ vadāmi sakiṃ vinipātagatena balena*). And why is that? Because there (in those unfortunate rebirths) there is no practice of the Dhamma, no right practice, there is no doing of good or making of merit; there, Monks, there is only mutual devouring and preying on the weak (*na h'ettha bhikkhave atthi dhammacariyā samacariyā kusalakiriyā puññakiriyā, aññamaññakhādikā ettha bhikkhave vattati dubbalamārikā*). Even if, Monks, that fool once in an extremely long time might obtain a human rebirth, he would be born into inferior families, outcaste families, families of hunters . . . in such a family that is poverty stricken, without food or drink. . . . Moreover, he would be ill-favored, ugly, dwarfish, sickly, blind . . . and he would be unable to obtain food, or drink, or clothes . . . (as a consequence) he would act wrongly in body, speech, and mind, and having acted wrongly in body, speech, and mind he would be reborn in a bad state, a bad destiny, an unfortunate destiny, a hell (. . . *apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ nirayaṃ uppajjati*)."[57]

As a piece of homiletics this, of course, would have been forceful and perhaps effective. But as an established "theological" position, it became a doctrinal assertion of the fate inadvertently assured for all believers—whether layman or monk—who were less than perfect. Such considerations appear gradually to have become apparent, and eventually required solutions. The presence of our passages, the modification and adaptation of the concept of *jātismara*, and much else in Mahāyāna sūtra literature, begins to make sense when they are seen as "solutions" to the problems created by the doctrine of karma—as correctives to a "solution" that became in its turn a problem.

NOTES

1. The initial research for this paper and a first draft were both completed during the year I spent as a Visiting Research Fellow at The International Institute for Buddhist Studies (formerly The Reiyukai Library) in Tokyo, and I will always owe a tremendous debt of gratitude, for things both large and small, to the staff of the Institute and especially to its enlightened Director, Dr. Akira Yuyama. Further research and a second draft were made possible by a grant from The Translations Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, for which I am also very grateful.

2. P. Demiéville, "Sur la mémoire des existences antérieures," *Bulletin de l'école française d'extrême-orient* 27 (1927) 283–98; esp. 283–90. For some inter-

esting remarks from a slightly different perspective see L. de La Vallée Poussin, "Le bouddha et les abhijñās," *Le museon* 44 (1931) 334–42; and for the *abhijñās* as a whole see the rich documentation assembled in Ét. Lamotte, *Le traité de la grande vertu de la sagesse*, t.IV (Louvain: 1976) 1809–1816.

3. P. Maxwell Harrison, *The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra*, Studia Philogica Buddhica, Monograph Series I (Tokyo: 1978) 20k, vs.1; see also 1k; 20k, vs.13; and 20h.

4. N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. II, Part I (Srinagar: 1941) 10.11; Vol. II, Part III (Calcutta: 1954) 608.14ff.; see also Vol. II, Part I, 16.11 and 151.3.

5. P. Python, *Vinaya-Viniścaya-Upāli-Paripṛcchā, Enquête d'Upāli pour une exégèse de la discipline* (Paris: 1973) 5; 83–84.

6. The Tibetan text is cited from Python, 26.5, but I have altered his transcription so that it conforms to the system proposed in T. Wylie, "A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 22 (1959) 261–67. All my citations from Tibetan will be transliterated according to this system.

7. J. Nobel, *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra, Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus* (Leipzig: 1937) xxxivff.

8. R.E. Emmerick, *The Sūtra of Golden Light, Being a Translation of the Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, Vol. 27 (London 1970) 9–10. I have supplied the material in brackets. The Skt. text is found at Nobel, 22.3.

9. Emmerick, 14; Nobel, 37.5.

10. For the *Bhadracaripraṇidhāna*, I have used the text edited in K. Watanabe, *Die Bhadracarī, Eine Probe buddhistisch-religiöser Lyrik, Untersucht und herausgegeben* (Leipzig: 1912).

11. All references are to the edition in V. Bhattacharya, *Bodhicaryāvatara* (Calcutta: 1960).

12. Nobel, 44.3f.

13. This is a translation that might also be suggested by Tibetan I (J. Nobel, *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra, Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus, die tibetischen Übersetzungen mit einem Wörterbuch*, Erster Band (Leiden/Stuttgart: 1944) 34.1), and more definitely by Tibetan III (J. Nobel, *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra, Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus. I-Tsing's chinesischen Version und ihre tibetische Übersetzung* (Leiden: 1958) 72.17f.).

14. Apart from a few exceptions, which will be noted, all my Tibetan material will be cited from *The Tibetan Tripiṭaka (Peking Edition)*, edited by D.T. Suzuki: references will give volume number, then page—"folio"—and line number.

15. R. Vira & L. Chandra, *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts (Facsimile Edition)*, Part 8 (New Delhi: 1974) No. 37, fol. 2254.3.

16. A. Mette, "Zwei kleine Fragmente aus Gilgit," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981) 134; 136.29.

17. For the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra* I quote the text established in G. Schopen, *A Sanskrit Text of the Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra from Gilgit: An Annotated Transcription of Manuscript No. 10b*, to be published in Studia Philologica Buddhica,

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Monograph Series, by The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, in 1984. Although the text I have established differs considerably, the corresponding passages in Dutt's edition are found at N. Dutt, Gilgit Manuscripts, Vol. I (Srinagar: 1939) 24.12 = my § 17 and 26.1 = my § 18.

18. Although I quote the Tibetan here, the *Buddhabalādhāna*—or at least some important fragments of it—was also found at Gilgit. See most recently G. Schopen, "The Five Leaves of the Buddhabalādhānaprātihāryavikurvāṇanirdeśa-sūtra Found at Gilgit," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 5 (1978) 319–36.

19. S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (London: 1884; repr. 1969) ii, 124; T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* (London: 1904–05; repr. 1973) ii, 124; cf. J.Ph. Vogel, "The Past Buddhas and Kāśyapa in Indian Art and Epigraphy," *Asiatica, Festschrift Friedrich Weller* (Leipzig: 1954) 815, 816.

20. cf. R. Birnbaum, *The Healing Buddha* (Boulder: 1979).

21. Nobel, 120.8.

22. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. I, 8.10, but cf., n. 17. Dutt 8.10 = my § 7.

23. H. Zimmermann, *Die Subhāṣita-ratna-karaṇḍaka-kathā (dem Āryaśūra zugeschriebin) und ihre tibetische Übersetzung*, Freiburger Beiträge zur Indologie, Bd. 8 (Wiesbaden: 1975) 163.

24. M. Walleser, *Aparimitāyur-jñāna-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtram, nach einer nepalesischen Sanskrit-Handschrift mit der tibetischen und chinesischen Version* (Heidelberg: 1916).

25. For the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* I have used the text in P.L. Vaidya, *Mahāyāna-Sūtra-Saṃgraha*, Part I (Darbhanga: 1961), although a fragmentary manuscript of it too was found at Gilgit (cf. O. von Hinüber, *Die Erforschung der Gilgit-Handschriften (Funde buddhistischer Sanskrit-Handschriften, I)* (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. I: Philo-Hist. Kl. Jg. 1979, Nr. 12) 343.

26. Vira & Chandra, Part 8, fol.2122.1; and fol.2158.7, no.36 fol.1991.5.

27. Text cited from Toganoo's edition reprinted in Y. Hatta, *Index to the Ārya-Prajñāpāramitā-Naya-Śata-Pañcāśatika* (Kyoto: 1971) 225.10.

28. The Tibetan text is cited from E. Conze, "Tantric Prajñāpāramitā Texts," *Sino-Indian Studies* 5, II (1956) 122; for his translation, see E. Conze, *The Shorter Prajñāpāramitā Texts* (London: 1973) 198.

29. S. Lévi, *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra, Exposé de la doctrine du grand véhicule selon le système Yogācāra*, t.I (Paris: 1907) XII.21–23.

30. E. Obermiller, *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung) by Bu-ston*, Part I (Heidelberg: 1931) 12.

31. Text from H.W. Bailey, *Indo-Scythian Studies, Being Khotanese Texts Volume V* (Cambridge: 1963) 375.166; see also 366.132 for the same passage in a second manuscript of the same text.

32. Text from A.C. Banerjee, *Nārāyaṇaparipṛcchā, Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts* (Calcutta: 1941) 15.4 (the Skt. for this passage is missing from Banerjee's Ms.).

This passage from the *Nārāyaṇaparipṛcchā* is followed immediately by another passage that also refers to *jātismara*. Although the Skt. text for this

also makes it clear that from the Buddhist perspective while sex is permitted at an appropriate place and time, it is not particularly approved of. In general the less the better.

There is very little on homosexuality in Buddhist writings, but Tibetan texts definitely see it as an inappropriate form of sexual activity. Such condemnation may be simply a cultural matter. The direction of Buddhist thought is to diminish sexual activity and make it as harmless as possible. In different cultural contexts what is harmful may change. Having said that, anal intercourse is also disapproved of (as is intercourse with a woman who is menstruating or pregnant). In Tibetan medicine homosexuality is treated non-perjoratively as an ordinary illness which can be cured. I have come across one source which also refers to sex with oneself as inappropriate — presumably masturbation. One lama comments that use of prostitutes 'is a great carnal sin', and there should not be sex with a girl who is pre- or only just pubertal. The point, he comments, is that within its own terms of reference sex should not involve pain but be pleasurable to both partners (Sangpo, 1982, p.88). One should not have sex in a temple, on the public highway, in front of an uncovered shrine and so on. One should not have sex during the day, or on festival days. Another lama has pointed out that there is nothing much wrong with the sexual act itself. It is, after all, just the rubbing together of sex organs (although in Tantric practice inappropriate sexual activity may be actually wrong for physiological reasons).

The problem with sexual relationships is that they lead to so many other negative states — 'jealousy, anger and obsession'. Moreover, they take up a lot of time, waste a lot of energy, and may lead to children which have to be brought up thus leaving less time for religious practice (Kalu Rinpoche, 1986, p.77). This is not to say that a life involving sexual activity within the permissible framework may not be praiseworthy, indeed laudable. There are cases in the Pali canon where the Buddha approves wholeheartedly of the married lives of laypeople who live in true devotion. They may be more advanced spiritually than monks who secretly lust.

Nevertheless the principle concern of Buddhism *qua* Buddhism is with the path to enlightenment. Treatment of the lower scope, where controlled sexual activity is permissable, is only a stage to the subsequent scopes. There need be nothing characteristically Buddhist about the lesser scope; there is nothing particularly Buddhist about morality. The middling scope, on the other hand, is that of renunciation, and this is first and foremost associated with monasticism where celibacy is strongly advocated and enforced. The purpose of celibacy is both to control and finally uproot one very strong form of desire which fuels the craving of rebirth, and also, in a very practical sense, to create a simple and open framework for full-time religious practice. Thus all forms of contact with the opposite sex are very strictly limited and controlled through precepts and confession, with appropriate sanctions. Kalu Rinpoche comments that in general the more we indulge our desires the more they increase. Desires, which themselves produce suffering, are insatiable. One way of dealing with this, and creating space, is simply to say 'Finished', and

have done with it (1986, p.78).

Because Buddhist texts were mainly written with monastics in mind, usually by and for monks, the extensive treatment of the disgusting and impure elements of the (particularly female) body, the foulness of sexual intercourse, which is bestial, the wife as an obstacle worse than a viper, are *meditation practices* appropriate to this stage. Although Buddhism undoubtedly did generate some misogyny, these texts are not *in themselves* evidence of misogyny, for they are not intended to make generally true statements applicable to women alone, *qua* women. Tārā is a woman, but Tibetans consider her to be a fully-enlightened Buddha. These meditations are devices for the cutting of particularly strong forms of desire. As the Hindu work the *Bhagavadgītā* states, and Buddhist sources admit (and Freud was aware), in the mind there are often none so lustful as those who are outwardly celibate (see Śāntideva, for example, 1971, p.83). There is a case recounted in the Pali canon where a monk, overcome with passion, returned to his former wife and had sexual intercourse with her. 'It would be better, foolish man, to put your penis into the mouth of a terrible and poisonous snake . . . a blazing, burning, red-hot charcoal pit than into a woman', the Buddha is reported to have said (Vin I 11 19).

One who has come to see things the way they really are, and has renounced all desire, yet has also generated great compassion and wishes to be reborn eventually to become a fully-enlightened Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings, is called a *bodhisattva*, the subject of the Mahāyāna and Atiśa's highest superior scope. For this person his or her very embodiment is for the benefit of others. He or she should not be subject to sexual desire. But he or she is also no longer concerned with her own welfare, only that of others. Sexual activity shorn of distorting craving is just the rubbing together of organs. Thus sex comes back into play. We read of the Buddha who in a previous life as a *bodhisattva* was a celibate Hindu *yogin*. A women fell in love with him, and threatened to kill herself. Eventually, out of his compassion, he married her. In his compassion he let go of his desire for self-righteousness; there is a higher morality than mere adherence to rules (Chang, 1983, p.443). In the wonderful *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* we read of the woman of easy virtue, Vasumitrā, who is in reality an advanced *bodhisattva* appearing in this form in order to help beings for whom this might be appropriate. Some, she explains, need embraces and kisses before they attain spiritual understanding.

This sounds nice — but it should not be taken out of context. It occurs on the basis of what has gone before; it affirms the negative attitude to sexuality in Buddhism, and does not negate it. From a sexual point of view to be a *bodhisattva* is not for yourself much fun. But the concern of the *bodhisattva* is not with fun. Maybe the last word could be left with Kalu Rinpoche, a great Buddhist practitioner who died a few years ago. He neatly sums-up the traditional Buddhist view within which the *bodhisattva* too operates:

> People are very attached to and concerned about sexual activity and take it to be a kind of bliss. Perhaps this is true on a relative level, but the ultimate state of bliss, of stable and permanent happiness, is incomparably beyond sexual

> experience: and, in a certain sense, sexual activity keeps you from this realization (1986, p. 77).

Of course, in Tantric practice sexual intercourse may become part of the path to enlightenment itself. But that is on a level where the minds of the practitioners are no longer in their ordinary coarse bodies. Who is at that level? It is not what it seems. So let's not worry about it.

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The Hidden Jewel

Eric Cheetham

(from the forthcoming 'Tales from the Silk Route')

There was in ancient India a young man who was quite well-off and who moved in a circle of equally well-off friends and acquaintances. One day, he went to visit one of them, and a few others were there, and the wine jar was passed around, and they all had a very good time. In fact, this young man had such a good time that he passed out, drunk.

His friends kindly laid him on a couch to recover, but being in very boisterous spirits, they began to conspire together. 'He's out for the count! Well, now, what can we do? Can we play a trick on him?' Of course, the young man was lying absolutely drunk to the world and couldn't have cared less

Some Thoughts on Buddhism in China Today

by John Blofeld

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(NOTE. The first part of this article has no direct bearing on the state of Buddhism, but reveals something of the social climate in which the traditional Chinese religions are to some extent reviving.)

Early this year I began receiving treatment in Bangkok, where I live, for cancer. By the end of April I seemed to be fighting a losing battle: the disease was gaining rapidly and the doctors' reports were not optimistic. Well, I am 73 years old and have had a wonderful life, so I had few regrets about leaving this world. Besides, to the miserably ill, death comes as a kindly release. Yet suddenly I decided to go to China. I wanted to see once more the country I had loved so well in days gone by; I also wanted to spare my daughter, Bom, harrowing death-bed duties; and I had heard just enough about Shanghai's Cancer Hospital to feel that there was hope of delaying the end long enough to be able to enjoy a short respite in China.

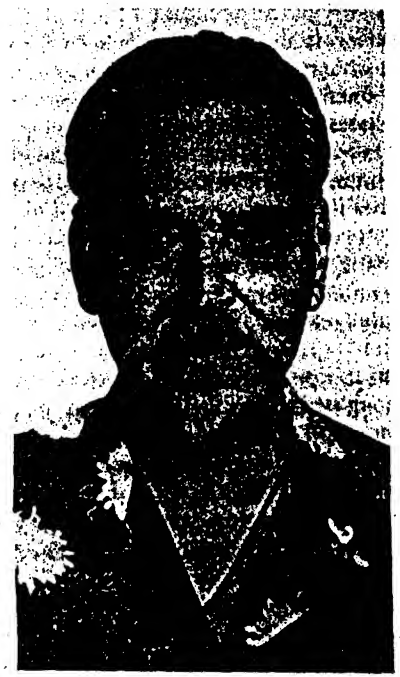
In the event, a Chinese lady living in Bangkok, whom I had once helped out of a difficulty, insisted on accompanying me to Shanghai, where her mother lives. On arrival, I found myself most welcome to live in her mother's house while under treatment at the Cancer Hospital. Like almost all Shanghai families these days, the Chang family's living space consisted of two rooms (one very small) shared by several people, a share in a kitchen serving three or four families, no bathroom, and no toilet other than a communal one serving a number of houses. Later, for my greater comfort, I was taken to live with the Wangs, an elderly couple related to the Changs, who had the rare good fortune to have two rooms to themselves, a tiny kitchen and a miniscule bathroom with flush toilet!

Both the Changs and the Wangs, though neither family had as much as set eyes on me before, and despite cramped quarters, straitened means, etc., treated me like a very close and well loved relative, waiting on me hand and foot, walking miles to buy me special food and little delicacies, accompanying me to the hospital daily, and always taking care to talk to me cheerfully and amusingly, rightly believing that keeping a patient in good spirits is an important component of treatment. After my recovery, they adamantly refused payment for the good food and other things lavished on me, and made quite an ado about accepting a few small presents.

At the hospital, being an old man, I was allowed to jump queues; moreover the doctors hastened to treat me at whatever time of day I managed to arrive — Shanghai transport being meagre and uncertain, to say the least. One of the doctors, a lady, also visited me regularly to talk over symptoms and treatment at leisure, charging nothing for her visits. Five doctors — all eminent medical professors — met several times to consult one another about my treatment. The only charges I had to meet were the hospital fees for use of the irradiator and for medicines consumed; no doctor's fees were charged at all!

Treatment was, so to speak, four-pronged. (1) A very modern machine

recently acquired from America, bombarded me with electrons, causing all external cancerous growth (but also my hair) to vanish into thin air. (2) Chemotherapy was employed to attack growths under the skin all over my body. (3) Chinese traditional medicine was used to nullify the harmful effects of (1) and (2), e.g. by keeping my white cell blood component at a high level, and by toning up the normal functioning of all my bodily organs. (4) Great stress was laid on psychological factors — optimism, cheerfulness, a relaxed state of mind, etc., being regarded as essential to a succesful cure. Within less than six weeks, I had regained my health to a point at which all obvious symptoms (e.g. external lumps, intense skin irritation, poor appetite, poor digestion, feeling wretched) had vanished and I was able to travel widely for pleasure! All the treatment, except (1) irradiation, is now being continued in Thailand with, I am told, good prospects of a total cure. Meanwhile, I am feeling fifteen years younger than before I fell ill! Such was the background to my rather limited on-the-spot investigation of the as yet limited but growing revival of Buddhism in China.



John Blofeld

The lesson to be learnt from my personal experiences as a very sick old person is that, despite the depredations of the Red Guards during the cultural revolution and the stern communist attitude towards religion as "the opium of the people", a number of ancient moral values (mostly of Confucian origin) are still very much alive in China — perhaps not in all families, but certainly in many. Most of the people (the Changs and lots of their relatives, as well as the doctors and hospital staff, etc.,) from whom I received heart-warming kindness and much practical assistance, were young or in early middle age, having been born, or at any rate reared and educated, after the communist revolution; nevertheless they exhibited strong Confucian virtues, e.g. benevolence, gratitude for kindness shown to a family member, filial piety and respect for the aged of a very active kind, involving for example the wearing of a "pleased expression" when doing chores for one's elders in their presence! I am thinking not just of their loving-kindness towards me, but also of what I observed of their attitudes, generationwise, towards one another.

What I have just said augurs well, I think, for the revival in China of its ancient religions, including Buddhism. It seems clear to me that traditional values — at least in many families — remain strong; and one can cull a good deal of evidence from items in Chinese newspapers to support this view. The

sharp mental break with the past which I had envisioned as the result of 38 years of communist rule has obviously not been as complete or as widespread as I had feared. Furthermore, the present régime has produced some notable benefits, among them a very great improvement in the housing and living standards of the peasants — 80% of the population. It stands to reason that people adequately housed and fed, and supplied with acceptable medical and educational facilities, will not be as iconoclastic as they were during the days when they suffered the pangs of hunger and want.

Economic improvement in rural areas, though unlikely to turn people's thoughts specifically towards religion, will certainly make them less harsh and intolerant towards deviants from the Maoist norm, including those who are inclined to value religious belief and practice. A live-and-let-live attitude is likely to prevail increasingly. Furthermore, the widespread disillusion that has resulted from the poor results achieved by rigid adherence to Maoist ideology over a long period has led individuals, as well as the authorites, to search for alternatives. This search has brought some people to re-appraise the traditional religions in a more favourable light than previously seemed possible.

It was against the background just outlined that I was able to come to some tentative conclusions about the Buddhist revival in China during the last few years. My travels during the weeks following upon the cessation of irradiation treatment took me to Suzhou (Soochow), Hangzhou (Hangchow), two large Buddhist monasteries near Ningpo and to the island of Puto (Potala) Shan, one of Chinese Buddhism's four sacred mountains. In addition, during treatment, I visited Shanghai's three main Buddhist monasteries and, a few months prior to falling ill, I had visited monasteries in Beijing and Kunming.

The general situation of contemporary Chinese Buddhism may be summed up as follows. Any religion may now be taught in China, but only in temples, churches, mosques, etc., not elsewhere; whereas it remains legal to preach atheism without restriction. Very many religious buildings burnt down or damaged during the cultural revolution period (1966–76) have been restored or are scheduled for restoration. Sacred rituals are now held regularly in many Buddhist monasteries and increasing numbers of people come to prostrate themselves before the Triple Gem, and sometimes to take part in more elaborate rites. The numbers of monks and nuns, though very small in comparison with what they were in pre-communist days, are increasing, as a rather surprisingly large number of young people apply annually to sit for the state examinations which must be passed prior to ordination. Financial help from Japanese and overseas Chinese Buddhists has been lavish in the case of some monasteries. We shall now examine some of these aspects in more detail.

Religious structures of artistic and/or historical value, which were either damaged or destroyed by iconoclasts, are being restored or rebuilt all over China. Traditional building and decorative skills are still available, but the quality of restoration varies from excellent to mediocre. The initial cost to the government must be immense; but throughout the year all over China there are eager hordes of sightseers on holiday. Receipts from the modest entrance

fee charged to all comers after restoration will soon repay the money spent and bring in handsome amounts for upkeep. A serious drawback is that sightseers vastly outnumber worshippers and create an atmosphere uncongenial to worship and contemplation. Furthermore, the resident monks or nuns (or their equivalent in buildings dedicated to other religions) are often called upon to act as curators whose duty it is to observe and direct long queues of sightseers; this must interfere very seriously with their religious studies and practice.

A propos of restoration, I was delighted to discover that excellent replicas of valuable images and other works of art wantonly destroyed can still be fashioned, and that aged craftsmen are passing on their skills to small groups of young apprentices. Wood-carving, metal-casting, lacquering, painting, plaster-sculpturing are, in some areas, still of very high quality.

The rites held in some Buddhist monasteries, especially the three big ones in Shanghai, are sometimes performed in several rooms or halls simultaneously and, in some cases, appear to continue all day with scarcely a pause. Most typically, certain famous sutras are read aloud by groups of monks or nuns, once or many times (depending on length). Such recitations are paid for by layfolk, who believe that this pious practice will earn merit for sick or recently deceased parents, kinsfolk, etc. In Shanghai, particularly, I was struck by the fear that an odour of commercialism emanated from the monks engaged in these rites (mostly very elderly monks). But was I right to be so critical? In the first place, many or most of those old monks had probably lived miserably and come close to starvation during the many years when the monasteries were closed. Was it not natural for them to secure for themselves an income sufficient to pay for adequate food, clothing and some small additional comforts? Secondly, were they in fact spending most of the income from rituals on the objects just mentioned, or were they energetically accumulating funds urgently needed for the propagation of the Buddha Dharma, the printing of sacred texts and teaching materials, etc? Who can say? I naturally felt shy about asking such questions.

The previous year I had visited Hua Ting Si (formerly Sze) in Yunnan, where I had lived in 1937 for ten months studying Ch'an (Zen) meditation. The recently restored public buildings gleamed with gilt and lacquer, whereas the monks' quarters had obviously not been maintained in good condition for 30 years or more, and the monks themselves looked thin and poorly dressed —.quite unlike their Shanghai brothers. I suppose that public funds for restoration are largely spent on public buildings and that monks and nuns, although entitled to a government stipend these days, get very, very little; so that those in somewhat remote areas, such as the monks in Hua Ting Si, remain impoverished; whereas those in or near large commercial centres, e.g. Shanghai, may expect relatively lavish support from well-to-do layfolk. That used to be the case in the old days also, with the result that the odour of sanctity seldom prevailed in city monasteries.

What causes considerable numbers of young people every year to sit for an examination leading to ordination, I really do not know, but I suspect the causes are numerous. The lives of most monks and nuns are likely to be fairly spartan compared with those of farmers or factory workers; chances of

second passage is preserved, it unfortunately appears in part to be corrupt, and Banerjee's handling of the Ms. material makes it difficult to suggest a satisfying emendation. He gives the passage in the following form (I have inserted in brackets the material I have taken from his notes):

> *yaś ca punar nārāyaṇa imaṃ [yogyaṃ]* [reconstructed from Tib. *rung] dhāraṇīṃ dhārayamāṇaḥ kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā bhikṣur vā bhikṣuṇī vā upāsako vā upāsikā vā rājā vā rājaputro vā brāhmaṇo vā mṛtaḥ kālagataḥ saddharmabhāṇako vā dagdho bhasmībhūto* [Ms. *'smi ca*] *vā punaś ca puruṣo vā strī vā kācit* [Ms. *cchāra* (?). Banerjee emends on the basis of Tib. *la la zhig*] *spṛśet sa eva niyato* [Ms. *niyato*(?)] *jātismaro bhaviṣyati* (4.18-5.2)

The Tibetan translation has:

> *sred med kyi bu / yang gang zhig rigs kyi bu 'am rigs kyi bu mo 'am dge slong ngam dge slong ma 'am dge bsnyen nam dge bsnyen ma 'am rgyal po 'am rgyal po'i bu 'am bram ze 'ang rung gzungs 'di 'dzin par byed pa 'chi ba'i duṣ la bab pa na dam pa'i chos kyi snang ba can du 'gyur zhing tshig pa 'am thal bar gyur pa la 'ang skyes pa 'am bud med gang la la zhig gis reg par bgyid pa de nyed nges par skyes ba dran par 'gyur ro /*

Although this Tib. translation seems to imply a Skt. text somewhat different from that found in Banerjee's Ms. and is therefore not altogether helpful for solving the problems in the latter, still it supports a certain interpretation of at least a part of the Skt. text. *If* we tentatively accept Banerjee's *bhasmībhūto* but reject the *vā* following it; *if* in addition we reject the *kācit* which Banerjee read on the basis of Tib. and take *cchara*(?) as possibly standing for *sāra* in the sense of "core," that which remains after cremation, or as a mistake for *śarīra, then* we can tentatively translate the Skt. as:

> "And if again, Nārāyaṇa, a son or daughter of good family, or a monk or nun, or a lay man or woman, or a king or a prince or a brahmin wearing this dhāraṇī were dead, deceased; or if a reciter of the Good Law had been cremated, reduced to ashes; and if again a man or woman were to touch the remains, he or she assuredly will come to be possessed of the recollection of his former births."

Lest the idea here seem altogether strange, we might cite another instance of the transmission of the benefits of a dhāraṇī through contact with remains of the dead. In this instance, however, which comes from the *Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsasarvatathāgatahṛdayasamayavilokatedhāraṇī* (Pe. Vol. 11, 228—1), the transmission is in the opposite direction: *bye ma la lan nyi shu rtsa geig bzlas brjod byas te dur khrod du gtor na / gang gi rus pa la bog pa de dag sems can dmyal ba gang dang gang du skyes ba de dang de nas yongs su thar te mtho ris su skye bar 'gyur ro / gang dag mtho ris su skyes ba de dag gi lus la me tog gi char 'bab par 'gyur ro /:* "If, reciting [this dhāraṇī] twenty-one times over some sand, he throws it into the burning grounds, on whom-so-ever's bones it would fall, they, in whatever hell they had been reborn, being released from that, would be reborn in heaven. Those who had (already) been reborn in heaven, on their bodies a rain of flowers would fall."

33. G. Schopen, "The Text on the 'Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya': A Minor Contribution to the Study of Mahāyāna Literature in Ceylon," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5,1 (1982) 100–108.

34. Y. Kurumiya, *Ratnaketuparivarta, Sanskrit Text* (Kyoto: 1978) 18.14.

35. E. Conze, *The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with the Divisions of the Abhisamayālaṅkara* (Berkeley: 1975) 40.

36. E. Chavannes, "Le sūtra de la paroi occidentale de l'inscription de Kiu-yong koan," *Mélanges Charles de Harlez* (Leyde: 1896) 74.

37. On the authorship of the *Ratnāvalī* see J.W. de Jong, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 20 (1978) 136–37.

38. On the question of the authorship of the *Mahāyāna-Sūtrālaṃkāra* see J. May, "La philosophie bouddhique idéaliste," *Asiatische Studien/Études asiatiques* 25 (1971) 285ff.

39. For a discussion of the datés of Śāntideva see J.W. de Jong, "La légende de Śāntideva," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 16 (1975) 161–82, esp. 179ff. (reprinted in J.W. de Jong, *Buddhist Studies*, ed. G. Schopen (Berkeley: 1979) 119–40).

40. On the Gilgit collection as a whole see the work by O. von Hinüber cited above in n.25 and, by the same author, "Die Erforschung der Gilgit-Handschriften. Nachtrag," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 130.2 (1980) *25–26* (Wissenschaftliche Nachrichten). Although most scholars today probably accept a 6th/7th Century date for the collection, at least one has argued that at least a part of the collection—on paleographical grounds—should be dated earlier, perhaps as early as the beginning of the 5th Century A.D. (see N.P. Çhakravarti, "The Gilgit Text of the Vajracchedikā", in G. Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, Part I (Roma: 1956) 177ff.)

41. Conze, "Tantric Prajñāpāramitā Texts," 100ff.

42. For the *Aparimitāyur-jñāna* see R.E. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan* (Tokyo:1979) 17, no. 3; D. Sinor, "A Középázsiai török buddhizmusról," *Körösi Csoma-Archivum* 1.5 (1939) 372, no. 9; A. Fujieda, "The Tunhuang Manuscripts, A General Description (Part I)," *Zinbun* 9 (1966) 5,7,13,31,32; (Part II), *Zinbun* 10 (1969) 36,38,39; J. Ishihama & S. Yoshimura, "Various Manuscripts of the Aparimitāyuḥ-Sūtra," *Monumenta Serindica*, Vol. I (Kyoto: 1958) 48–50.—On the *Sitātapatra* see S. Sengupta, "A Note on Usnisa-sitatapatra-pratyaṃgira . . . Dharani," *Buddhist Studies, Journal of the Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi*, March 1974, pp. 68–75.

43. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan*.

44. J.W. de Jong, review of Zimmerman, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 18 (1976) 318 (repr. in *Buddhist Studies*, 321).

45. On both these texts in inscriptions see the paper cited above in n.33, and G. Schopen, "The Bodhigarbhālaṅkāralakṣa and Vimaloṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇīs in Indian Inscriptions: Two Sources for the Practice of Buddhism in Medieval India," in preparation. In regard to Gilgit it might be noted that if my identification of the "Schutzformel" written on birchbark strips and published by Professor von Hinüber is correct, if it is in fact the 2nd dhāraṇī from the *Samantamukhapraveśa*, then it would seem that this text too—although it has not yet been found among the known Mss.—was also known at Gilgit. This identification might also suggest some minor corrections to Professor von Hinüber's reading of the "formula" (see O. von Hinüber, "Namen in Schutzzaubern aus Gilgit," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981) 166–67.

46. I have taken all these dates from P. Demiéville, H. Durt et A. Seidel, *Répertoire du canon bouddhique sino-japonais, édition de Taisho, Fascicule annexe du Hōbōgirin*, deuxième édition révisée et augmentée (Tokyo:1978)

47. There are two possible exceptions to this. In the *Daśabuddhakasūtra* (Pek. Vol. 37, 94–5–1) it is said . . . *de'i mtshan bzung na . . . tshe rabs dran par 'gyur ro / mngon par shes pa lnga dang sangs rgyas kyi chos ma 'dres pa bco brgyad 'thob par 'gyur ro /*: ". . . if one would preserve his name [i.e. that of the 9th Buddha mentioned in the text] . . . he would recollect his former births. He would obtain the five superknowledges and the eighteen characteristics peculiar to a Buddha." In the *Raśmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā* (Pek. Vol. 7, 190–5–1), as a part of a list of "benefits" following from making a stūpa in conjunction with reciting a dhāraṇī, it is said that the individual will be reborn in his next life in a pure Buddha field and that . . . *der yang tshe lo bye ba khrag khrig brgya stong thub par 'gyur te sngon gyi gnas rjes su dran pa dang / lha'i mig dang lha'i rna ba rnam par dag pa thob cing pha rol gyi sems shes pa dang 'chi ba 'pho ba dang skye ba shes 'thob bo / lus las tsan dan gyi dr 'i ngad 'byung zhing*, etc. In the first of these two passages, note that while it is true that *jātismara* occurs in a list the next item of which is the five *abhijñās*, the way in which the list is drawn up appears to indicate that whoever compiled it had completely forgotten that *jātismara* was supposed to be the fourth of the five *abhijñās*. It appears that for him *jātismara* and the five *abhijñās* were two completely independent things. In the second passage, in addition to the somewhat unusual order, note that *jātismara* is obtained in association with the other four *abhijñās* not in this world but in a "pure Buddha field," and that this reference is therefore closest to the reference to *jātismara* already pointed out by Demiéville in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (Demiéville, "Sur la mémoire des existences antérieures," 296n.3).

48. See G. Schopen, "Sukhāvatī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 19 (1977) 177–210. Of the texts I have cited in the present paper which offer the obtainment of *jātismara* as a generalized "benefit" following from merit-making activity, note that the following also offer rebirth in *Sukhāvatī* on the same terms: the *Bhadracarīpraṇidhāna*, *Bhaiṣajyaguru*, *Aparimitāyur-jñāna*, and the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, all of which are discussed in *Indo-Iranian Journal* 19 (1977), plus the following texts in which rebirth in Sukhāvatī is offered as a generalized "benefit" but which are not mentioned there: *Daśabuddhaka* (Pek. Vol. 37, 94–3–6); *Saptabuddhaka* (Pek. Vol. 37, 90–4–4); *Sitātapatra* (Bailey) 367.141, 375.177; *Bodhimaṇḍalalakṣa* (Lhasa, rgyud Ta)495a; *Raśmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā* (Pek. Vol. 7, 192–2–4); *Samantamukhapraveśa* (Pek. Vol. 11, 227–2–7; 228–3–6, 4–4, 5–7).

49. For a discussion of the layman/monk distinction based on epigraphical sources see G. Schopen, "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1983) in the press.

50. Demiéville, "Sur la mémoire des existences antérieures," 287; 294, 295.

51. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. I, 25.2 = my § 17.

52. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. I, 9.8 = my § 7.

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53. See *VII* above.

54. I am here not talking about the well known problems of harmonizing the doctrine of karma and the doctrine of *anātman*. These were essentially problems of Buddhist scholastics, which probably had little if any effect on the actual "world" of the average practicing Buddhist (cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, "Dogmatique bouddhique. La négation de l'âme et la doctrine de l'acte," *Journal asiatique* (1902) 237–306). The problem or problems I am concerned with here are of a fundamentally different sort.

55. *Dhammapada* vs. 127 as translated in Ét. Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien* (Louvain: 1958) 37.

56. L. de La Vallée Poussin, "Dogmatique bouddhique II. Nouvelles recherches sur la doctrine de l'acte," *Journal asiatique* (1903) 371n.

57. I give here in part a free and somewhat condensed version of this frequently translated passage; cf. I.B. Horner, *The Middle Length Sayings (Majjhima-Nikāya)* Vol. III (London: 1959) 214–15. For the simile of the yoke and the turtle see the references in de Jong, *Buddhist Studies*, 316; 320).

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Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self-Image and Identity Among the Followers of the Early Mahāyāna

by Paul Harrison

As far as most Buddhist scholars nowadays are concerned, the Mahāyāna was a movement which originated in India some 300 or 400 years after the death of Gautama. Building on various doctrinal developments among certain schools of the so-called Hīnayāna, notably the Mahāsāṅghikas, it promoted a new ideal, that of the *bodhisattva*, or *buddha*-to-be, as opposed to the older *arhat*-ideal. In criticizing the *arhat* the early Mahāyānists are commonly thought to have been striking a blow against the monastic elitism of the Hīnayāna; and their new ideal is supposed to have been developed, in part at least, as a response to the spiritual needs and concerns of the laity.[1] This supposition also finds expression in the claim that, since the Buddha himself had been idealised beyond human reach, the *bodhisattvas* were invented as fitting recipients of the devotion (*bhakti*) of the masses, objects of a cult analogous to the cult of the saints in Christianity.[2] It has also been suggested that the new movement looked more favourably on the religious aspirations and capabilities of women. All these factors are cited as reasons for the success the Mahāyāna enjoyed in establishing itself as a truly popular religion, first in India and subsequently in other countries.

This paper sets out to examine all these assumptions, and to ask the question 'What did it mean to be a follower of the Mahāyāna?' In other words, who or what is a *bodhisattva*? Are *bodhisattvas* really exalted beings, 'divine saviors' or 'saints', or are they ordinary mortals? Can laypeople be *bodhisattvas*? Can

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women be *bodhisattvas*? And whatever the answers to these questions, what were the consequences of affiliation with the Mahāyāna for people's sense of their own religious identity vis-à-vis other Buddhists, and in relation to followers of other religious paths?

These are, of course, wide-ranging questions, and none of them is amenable to a simple answer. To reduce the scope of the problem, I propose to confine my remarks to the early Mahāyāna, using as sources the first Chinese translations of Mahāyāna *sūtras*. This comparatively small body of texts—11 in all—was produced in the second half of the 2nd century C.E., or shortly thereafter, by a small group of foreign translators working in the Han capital of Luoyang; most of them are the work of the Indo-Scythian Lokakṣema, active c. 168–189 C.E. Their value lies in the fact that they are the oldest literary evidence for the Mahāyāna, and preserve the earliest phase of that movement frozen, as it were, in an archaic semi-vernacular Chinese; later translations and the Sanskrit texts themselves can and often do contain later accretions, which reduce their value as historical evidence, at least as far as the early period is concerned. The 11 translations themselves have been described at length elsewhere[3]; here they need only be listed with a few essential details:

1. *AsPP* : T.224[4], *Daoxing banruo jing*[a]
   = *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*
   Translated by Lokakṣema and Zhu Foshuo, 179 C.E.

There are six other Chinese translations, and one Tibetan translation, the *'Phags-pa shes-rab-kyi pha-rol-tu phyin-pa brgyad-stong-pa*. The Sanskrit text is extant, and has been rendered into English by E. Conze: *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verse Summary* (1st ed., Asiatic Society of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1958; reprinted, with corrections, Four Seasons Foundation, Bolinas, Cal., 1975). For full bibliographical details of this key text in its many versions, see E. Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (2nd ed., The Reiyukai, Tokyo, 1978), pp. 46–50.

2. *PraS* : T.418, *Banzhou sanmei jing*[b]
   = *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*

Translated by Lokakṣema, Zhu Foshuo *et al.*, 179 C.E., subsequently revised, probably by members of Lokakṣema's school, in 208. Parts of the original version survive.

There are three other Chinese translations (T.416, T.417, T.419) and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa da-ltar-gyi sangs-rgyas mngon-sum-du bzhugs-pa'i ting-nge-'dzin ces-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*, for a critical edition of which see P. Harrison, *The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra* (*Studia Philologica Buddhica, Monograph Series, I*) (The Reiyukai Library, Tokyo, 1978). The Sanskrit text is lost, except for one small fragment, published as the "Bhadrapāla Sūtra" in A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, ed., *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature* (Oxford, 1916), pp. 88–93, 410–411. An English translation and study of this text is currently being prepared by the author, and a translation of T.418 itself is in press.

3. *3DKP* : T.624, *Dun zhentuoluo suowen rulai sanmei jing*[c]
   = *Druma-kinnararāja-paripṛcchā-sūtra*
   Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There is one other Chinese translation (T.625), and one Tibetan version, entitled *'Phags-pa mi-'am-ci'i rgyal-po sdong-pos zhus-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The Sanskrit text has been lost.

4. *AjKV* : T.626, *Azheshi wang jing*[d]
   = *Ajātaśatru-kaukṛtya-vinodanā-sūtra*
   Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There are three other Chinese translations (T.627, T.628, T.629), and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa ma-skyes-dgra'i 'gyod-pa bsal-ba zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The Sanskrit text is not extant.

5. *TSC* : T.280, *Dousha jing*[e]
   = part of the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*
   Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There are two other Chinese versions (T.278, T.279), and one Tibetan version, the *Sangs-rgyas phal-po-che zhes-bya-ba shin-tu rgyas-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The material corresponding to the *TSC* occurs in Chap. XII (*Sangs-rgyas-kyi mtshan shin-tu bstan-pa*) and Chap. XIV (*De-bzhin gshegs-pa'i 'od-zer-las rnam-par sangs-rgyas-pa*). For a partial English translation of this text see Thomas Cleary, transl., *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the*

Avatamsaka Sūtra, Vol. I (Shambhala, Boulder, 1984).

6. *LAN* : T.807, *Neizang baibao jing*[f]
= *Lokānuvartana-sūtra*
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

No other Chinese versions survive, but there is one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa 'jig-rten-gyi rjes-su 'thun-par 'jug-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. The complete Sanskrit text is lost, but a substantial number of verses from it appear in the *Mahāvastu* and the *Prasannapadā*, for which see P. Harrison, "Sanskrit Fragments of a Lokottaravādin Tradition" in L.A. Hercus *et al.*, eds., *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday* (Faculty of Asian Studies, Canberra, 1982), pp. 211–234.

7. *WWP* : T.458, *Wenshushili wen pusa shu jing*[g]
= Sanskrit title unknown
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

There are no other versions; the Sanskrit text is lost.

8. *KP* : T.350, *Yiri monibao jing*[h]
= *Kāśyapa-parivarta*
Translated by Lokakṣema, c. 168–189 C.E.

For a German rendering of Lokakṣema's version, see F. Weller, "Kāśyapaparivarta nach der Han-Fassung verdeutscht", *Buddhist Yearly* 1968/69 (Halle, 1970), pp. 57–221.

There are four other Chinese versions: T.351 (F. Weller, "Kāśyapaparivarta nach der Djin-Fassung verdeutscht", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung*, XII (1966), pp. 379–462), T.310, No. 43 (F. Weller, "Kāśyapaparivarta nach der Tjin-Übersetzung verdeutscht", *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig*, XIII (1964), Heft 4, pp. 771–804), T.659 (Chap. VII), and T.352 (F. Weller, "Die Sung-Fassung des Kāśyapaparivarta", *Monumenta Serica*, XXV (1966), pp. 207–361).

The Tibetan version, the *'Od-srung-gi le'u*, appears with four Chinese versions in the well-known edition of the Sanskrit text by A. von Stäel-Holstein, *The Kāçyapaparivarta, A Mahāyānasūtra of the Ratnakūṭa Class* (Shanghai, 1926; reprinted, Meicho-Fukyū-Kai, Tokyo, 1977); see also J.W. de Jong, "Sanskrit Fragments of the Kāśyapaparivarta" in *Beiträge zur Indienforschung Ernst Waldschmidt zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, 1977), pp. 247–255.

There are a number of modern-language translations of this important text: F. Weller, *Zum Kāśyapaparivarta*, Heft 2, Verdeutschung des sanskrit-tibetischen Textes (*Abhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse*, Band 57, Heft 3) (Berlin, 1965); Bhikkhu Pasadika, "The Dharma-Discourse of the Great Collection of Jewels, The Kāśyapa Section", published serially in *Linh Son publication d'études bouddhologiques*, I–IX (1977–79); Garma C.C. Chang, ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* (Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Penn., 1983), pp. 387–414; Nagao Gadjin and Sakurabe Hajime, "Kashō-hon", in *Daijō butten*, Vol. IX (Chūōkōronsha, Tokyo, 1974), pp. 5–124.

9. *AkTV* : T.313, *Achufo guo jing*[i]
= *Akṣobhya-tathāgatasya-vyūha-sūtra*
Attributed to Lokakṣema, but probably the work of one of his contemporaries or of later members of his school.

Although the Sanskrit text has been lost, we still possess one other Chinese version (T.310, No. 6) and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa de-bzhin-gshegs-pa mi-'khrugs-pa'i bkod-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*. For full bibliographical details, see *Buddhist Text Information*, 40–41 (June & Sept. 1984). A partial French translation has been published by J. Dantinne: *La Splendeur de l'Inébranlable (Akṣobhyavyūha)*, Tome I (Université Catholique de Louvain, Institut Orientaliste, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1983), while an English translation (with omissions) based on the Chinese text (T.310,6) may be found in Garma C.C. Chang, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 315–338.

10. *CGD* : T.630, *Chengju guangming dingyi jing*[j]
= Sanskrit title unknown.
Attributed to Zhi Yao, active late 2nd century.

There are no other versions; the Sanskrit text is lost.

11. *UP* : T.322, *Fajing jing*[k]

= *Ugra (datta)-paripṛcchā-sūtra*
Translated by An Xuan and Yan Fotiao, active c. 180 C.E.

There are two other Chinese versions (T.310, No. 19, and T.323) and one Tibetan version, the *'Phags-pa drag-shul-can-gyis zhus-pa zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po'i mdo*, which has been translated into Japanese by Sakurabe Hajime in *Daijō butten*, Vol. IX (Chūōkōronsha, Tokyo, 1974), pp. 231–335.

It should be noted here that the use of these texts for historical research into Indian Buddhism presents certain problems, although, due to considerations of space, a full methodological discussion will have to be reserved for a later date. As translations they are reasonably reliable, but by no means as reliable as their Tibetan counterparts, against which they need to be checked. Although they were all produced at roughly the same time and roughly the same place, the original *sūtras* may well have been written at different times, in different places, and by different hands. Furthermore, those hands were almost certainly those of literate males, probably monks, which means that the *sūtras* must represent a limited point of view, albeit an influential one. These problems are all serious, to be sure, but it can nevertheless be argued that if these texts are used with the appropriate caution, their evidential value is substantial, especially in view of the fact that, apart from a small number of inscriptions,[5] we have little else to assist our enquiries. They certainly contain sufficient data to enable us to arrive at unequivocal answers to at least some of our questions.

To begin with, how is the Mahāyāna referred to in these translations? The term *Mahāyāna* itself is found, either transliterated (*moheyan*[l]) or translated (*dadao*[m], "the Great Way"), but it is surprisingly rare (about 20 occurrences in all). Not much more frequent is the use of the term "Bodhisattva Way" (*oysa-dao*[n]), which may or may not render *bodhisattvayāna* or *bodhisattvamārga* in the original Sanskrit (or Indic) text. If we examine those translations for which the Sanskrit is still extant, we find, e.g., that in Lokakṣema's version of the *KP pusadao* occurs several times, twice translating *mahāyāna* (*KP* 3, 118), once *bodhisattva-mārga* (*KP* 12), and once in a periphrastic rendering of *udārādhimukta* as "those who delight in the Bodhisattva Way" (*KP* 11). In the *AsPP* we find it used for *duṣkara-cārikā* (428b18) and *bodhisattva-cārikā* (428b20), but most often, in the expression *xing pusadao zhe*[o], it renders *bodhisattvayānikāḥ pudgalāḥ*, "people who are adherents of the Bodhisattvayāna" (e.g. 447b3,24–25,465c9–10). When the term is found in other translations it usually occurs in the phrase *xing* (or *qiu*) *pusadao zhe*[p], "those who practise (or seek) the Bodhisattva Way", pointing once again to an original *bodhisattvayānika*. The rarity of the terms *mahāyāna* and *bodhisattvayāna* already invites the conclusion that at this stage there was no rigid division of the Buddhist Sangha into two hostile camps to the extent that the modern understanding of the terms 'Mahāyāna' and 'Hīnayāna' implies. There was indeed a new spirit abroad: the authors of our texts are devoted to its promulgation, but there is little evidence of any urge on their part to enshrine their different point of view in hard and fast sectarian categories, something to which we shall return later. Rather than speak of the Mahāyāna, they chose to address themselves to those substantive issues which we have come to associate with that movement, i.e. the doctrines of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) and the five other perfections, skill-in-means (*upāyakauśalya*) and, above all, the career of the *bodhisattva*, the aspirant to awakening or buddhahood. It is especially in their treatment of the *bodhisattva* that we can see how these early Mahāyāna writers conceived of their identity and their place within the Buddhist world.

In these archaic Chinese texts the word *bodhisattva* is almost always transliterated as *pusa*[q], although the *UP* uses the translation *kaishi*[r] ("the revealer") while the *CGD* has settled on the rendering *mingshi*[s] ("the enlightened one"). In most of our *sūtras* the word occurs prolifically, and is generally neutral with regard to lay/monastic status and gender. (As far as the latter is concerned, this is not surprising, since Classical Chinese lacks any kind of inflectional system for conveying distinctions of gender, number and case; but in the original Sanskrit *sūtras* the word *bodhisattva* would always have been masculine.) Frequently, however, different types of *bodhisattvas are* distinguished, the most common distinction being a twofold one between 'renunciant' or 'monastic' *bodhisattvas*, those who have left the household life to devote themselves full-time to spiritual matters, and 'house-

holder' or 'lay' *bodhisattvas*, who practise their religion as full members of society. These two categories are sometimes further subdivided according to gender to arrive at the "four classes of disciples", i.e. *bodhisattvas* who are monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. I propose to look at the basic twofold lay/monastic division first, and then examine the male/female one to see what distinction, if any, is made on the basis of gender. As simple as this approach sounds, it does present difficulties, since the male is taken as paradigmatic, and is often clearly intended even when the texts are speaking generally in terms which could apply equally well to men and women. Before we look at these divisions, however, let us first see what terms are used to refer to the "four classes of disciples" collectively and individually.

The expression "four classes of disciples" itself (Chinese: *sibei dizi*[t] or *sibu dizi*[u]) occurs occasionally (e.g. *AsPP* 467b29,469a18–19; *AkTV* 757b15–16; *CGD* 456a2; *PraS* 915a10), as does the full enumeration of these classes, i.e. *biqiu biqiuni youposai youpoyi*[v] (=*bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas* and *upāsikās*, or monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen; e.g. *PraS* 918a8–9; *DKP* 364a18).[6] These terms are, of course, of general application, and are frequently used in our texts without any specific reference to followers of the Mahāyāna. Often, however, the connection is explicit, especially in those few passages in which the four classes are discussed in sequence. The best example of this is Chapter 6 of Lokakṣema's version of the *PraS*, which deals in turn with "Bodhisattvas who forsake desire and become *bhikṣus*" (*pusa qi aiyu zuo biqiu*[w]), "*bhikṣuṇīs* who are *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*" i.e. nuns who have set out in the Mahāyāna (*biqiuni qiu moheyan-sanbazhi*[x]),[7] "white-robed *bodhisattvas* who cultivate the Way while living at home" (*baiyi pusa jujia xiudao*[y]) and "*upāsikās* who are *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*" (*youpoyi qiu moheyan-sanbazhi*[z]) (*PraS* 909b12–910c29). We also find the expressions *bhikṣu-bodhisattva* or *bodhisattva-bhikṣu*, i.e. *biqiu pusa*[aa] (e.g. *PraS* 909b24,26–27; *AkTV* 752c22; *AsPP* 461b23), or, in the more idiosyncratic renderings of the *CGD* and the *UP*, *kaishi qujie wei* (or *xiu*) *dao*[ab] ("the revealer who has left home to pursue the Way": *UP* 15c3,10–11; 19c1–2) or *mingshi chu-e*[ac] ("the enlightened one who eliminates evil": *CGD* 451b7, 458b10), in which *qujia*[ad] and its equivalents are probably doing service for an original Sanskrit *pravrajita*, "one who has gone forth". Often,

however, it is simply clear from the context that the text is dealing with *renunciant bodhisattvas*, and the same holds true for lay *bodhisattvas*, who, when specified, are referred to as *zaijia*[ae] or *jujia*[af] *pusa* ("*bodhisattvas* who remain in the home") or *baiyi*[ag] *pusa* ("white-robed *bodhisattvas*"). Our texts devote considerable attention to these lay *bodhisattvas*, those who pursue the goal of buddhahood through observance of the Five Precepts, study of Mahāyāna *sūtras* and meditation. One passage in the *PraS* on the layman *bodhisattva* sums up much of this material particularly well:

> "White-robed *bodhisattvas* who, on hearing this *samādhi*, wish to study and cultivate it, should adhere firmly to the Five Precepts and keep themselves pure. They should not drink wine, nor should they give it to others to drink. They should not have intercourse with women—they should not have it themselves, nor should they teach others to have it. They should not have any affection for their wives, they should not hanker after their sons and daughters, and they should not hanker after possessions. They should always think longingly of leaving their wives and taking up life as *śramaṇas*. They should always keep the Eightfold Fast, and at the time of the Fast they should always fast in a Buddhist monastery. They should always think of giving without thinking that they themselves will get merit from it—they should give for the sake of all people. They should love their good teachers, and when they see *bhikṣus* who keep the precepts they ought not to despise them or speak ill of them." (*PraS* 910b12–21)

A number of common themes stand out here. These *bodhisattvas* may well be in the world, but they are not of it. Like lotuses, they grow out of the mud of the passions (*KP* 72–75), but because of their endowment with wisdom and skill-in-means they are undefiled by them (*KP* 48; *DKP* 351a2–4). To ensure that they remain undefiled, they must be strict in their adherence to the Five Precepts, especially those relating to intoxicants and sex, hence a negative attitude to all possible objects of attachment, particularly wives and children, is often recommended (e.g. *UP* 16c2–17a14, 18b7–c11; *AsPP* 455b20–26). This incidentally reveals the extent to which these *sūtras* were written from a male point of view, since *bodhisattvas* are never urged to regard their husbands as demons, sources of misery and so on. The house-

hold life is in fact a curse, since it destroys all one's 'roots of goodness' and only heaps more fuel on the fire of the passions (*UP* 17b20–c26), consequently *bodhisattvas* are best advised to quit it as soon as possible (*DKP* 353b26–27, 356c28–29). But as long as they choose to retain their lay status, they should not forget to treat their monastic counterparts with due reverence and generosity (*UP* 16a5–12, 19a1–b24). It is clear, therefore, that there is a definite ambivalence in these texts about the position of lay *bodhisattvas*. On the one hand lay *bodhisattvas* frequently occupy the centre stage, both in terms of the narrative framework of the *sūtras* and in terms of the teachings expounded in them (this is especially so in the *PraS*, *CGD* and *UP*); on the other hand they are constantly exhorted to leave lay life behind, to become renunciants, and, what is more, to embrace the "ascetic qualities" (*dhuta-guṇa*), the discipline of the solitary forest-dwelling monk or nun (*KP* 17, *PraS* 903b24–25; cf. *AsPP* 461a10–b18). The *UP* even goes so far as to say that "no *bodhisattva* has ever attained the Way [i.e. awakening] as a householder: they all leave home and go into the wild, and it is by living in the wild that they attain the Way" (*UP* 19a21–22). As for the renunciant *bodhisattvas* themselves, in those passages which are explicitly or implicitly devoted to them, observance of the *Vinaya* looms large, together with respect for teachers, especially those from whom they hear Mahāyāna *sūtras*, be they male or female, lay or renunciant (e.g. *PraS* 909c1–9). Renunciants are urged to teach in their turn, to give the 'gift of the Dharma', but without any expectation of reward. For them too the virtues of the solitary life are extolled, as well as the conquest of desires and attachments, and they are warned of the perils of doubt and sloth. Most of this material, with its strong ethical emphasis, is of course fairly standard to all forms of Buddhism.

Despite some ambivalence about the value of the household life, we can see already that there is no doubt about the existence of both lay and renunciant *bodhisattvas*. Even *bodhisattvas* who have attained the advanced stage of 'non-regression', who are *avaivartika*, assured of attaining awakening, can still be laypeople (see e.g. *AsPP* 455b20–c5). However, when we turn to the question of whether women can be full *bodhisattvas*, the answer is not so clear. We have already observed that in listing the four classes of disciples, the *PraS* describes nuns and laywomen not

as *bodhisattvas*, as it does the monks and laymen, but as *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*, "set out in the Mahāyāna". In other words it scrupulously avoids calling women *bodhisattvas*. Theoretically speaking, women should be capable of assuming the title *bodhisattva*. In nearly all our texts the teachings are addressed to "sons and daughters of good family" (Sanskrit: *kulaputra-kuladuhitṛ*; Chinese usually: *shan nanzi shan nüren*[ah]),[8] and it is made clear in most cases that both groups are expected to embrace the particular doctrine or practice being expounded. Furthermore, in some texts the terms "sons and daughters of good family" and "*bodhisattvas*" are used interchangeably (e.g. *AsPP* 446b10ff.; *AkTV* 759a16ff., 762a16; *WWP* 435b14–15; *UP* 15b24ff.), though it is not always the case that sons and daughters of good family are followers of the Mahāyāna (e.g. *AkTV* 763b17–21). In addition, women can conceive the aspiration to awakening (*bodhicitta*). This happens in at least two texts, the *DKP*, in which the 84,000 wives of King Druma take this step (359b11ff., 360c26ff.), and the *AsPP*, in which an *upāsikā* by the name of Dajie[ai] (Sanskrit equivalent unknown) has her eventual awakening predicted by Śākyamuni, who recalls her initial aspiration to it under the Buddha Dīpaṃkara.[9] Now those who have conceived the aspiration to awakening—who have, in other words, "set out in the Mahāyāna" (*mahāyāna-saṃprasthita*)[10]—are technically *bodhisattvas*, yet our *sūtras* display a consistent (or perhaps inconsistent?) reluctance to accord this title to women. This can only be because of a negative attitude towards the female sex, an attitude which is clearly demonstrable throughout these early texts. The *DKP* provides the best example of it. Even though the 84,000 wives of Druma conceive the aspiration to awakening, they are concerned about the fact that "it is difficult for a woman to attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*", whereupon the Buddha proceeds to tell them at length about the things they have to do to leave off being women and quickly attain rebirth as males (*DKP* 361b9–362a2). Later he predicts their rebirth as males in the Tuṣita heaven in the presence of Maitreya (362a20–28). This theme of the undesirability of birth as a woman and the necessity of a change of sex is a common one: the *upāsikā* Dajie has to be reborn as a male before she makes any real progress (*AsPP* 458a18–19), while the same is true of Sadāprarudita's 500 female companions (*AsPP* 477b14–

17). In other texts as well women are told that they should always aspire to rebirth as males (e.g. *CGD* 457b19–20). According to the *AsPP* (454b27–28) non-regressing *bodhisattvas* are never reborn as women, although the *DKP* claims that a *bodhisattva* endowed with skill-in-means may manifest in female form in order to teach women (358c11).[11]

When we look at the descriptions of buddhafields, which represent ideal worlds from a Buddhist point of view, we find that either women are not present at all, as in Druma's *buddhakṣetra* Candravimala (*DKP* 362a17), or they are infinitely more beautiful and virtuous than the women of this world, as in Akṣobhya's *buddhakṣetra* Abhirati (*AkTV* 755c28–756a2). The portrayal of the female inhabitants of Abhirati is especially revealing (756b3–15), since they are supposed to lack the vices of the women of this world, who are said to be "ill-favoured and ugly, with harsh tongues, jealous of the Dharma and addicted to heretical practices". For the paragons of femininity in Abhirati, by contrast, fine clothes and jewelry literally grow on trees, they feel no pain or weariness in pregnancy or childbirth, and they are free of "offensive discharge from the stinking place" (undoubtedly the 'polluting' flow of menstrual blood), all thanks to the former vow of Akṣobhya (see *AkTV* 753a11-16 for this; cf. *AsPP* 455b19-25). The supposed foibles and defects of women are also highlighted in these *sūtras* by those passages which deal with the special regulations and requirements for nuns and laywomen who follow the Bodhisattva Path (see esp. *PraS* 910a15-b9, c6-29; *CGD*457b14-c29; see also *DKP* 361b11-362a2). Although there is considerable overlap in these passages with those pertaining to monks and laymen, certain qualities appear to be more readily ascribed to women, such as an excessive concern for personal adornment, spiteful and malicious gossip, jealousy, deceitfulness, superstition and fondness for non-Buddhist religious practices.

If we attempt to sum up our findings on the status of women as far as these early Mahāyāna *sūtras* are concerned, we must conclude that although women, both lay and renunciant, are included as recipients of the new teaching on a theoretically equal footing with men, they are generally represented in such an unfavourable light as to vitiate any notion of the Mahāyāna as a movement for sexual equality. Compared with the situation

in the Pāli Canon, in which women are at least as capable as men of attaining the highest goal, arhatship, the position of women in the Mahāyāna has hardly changed for the better, since women cannot attain buddhahood, and even the title of *bodhisattva* is withheld from them. Of course all this reflects the attitudes of the men (probably monks) who produced these texts, but this does not make the conclusion any less inescapable: although both men and women can ride in the Great Vehicle, only men are allowed to drive it.

Before we turn to the drivers and passengers of the "Small Vehicle", there is one other question we must deal with, that relating to the so-called "Celestial Bodhisattvas", Avalokiteśvara and the others, those compassionate agents of salvation who, according to some authorities, were provided by the Mahāyāna in response to the devotional needs of the masses. It has been suggested that these figures were called *mahāsattvas* ("Great Beings") to distinguish them from other *bodhisattvas*.[12] There is no evidence for such a distinction in our texts: *mahāsattva* (probably signifying "one whose aspiration or courage is great") is widely used together with *bodhisattva*, and is virtually a synonym for it (see *AsPP* 427b13-27 for a discussion of its meaning). The double expression *bodhisattva-mahāsattva* is employed with reference to householders, occurs interchangeably with "sons and daughters of good family", and is even used when the talk turns to *bodhisattvas* who fall into error (e.g., *AsPP* 444c2, 446c22ff.). Be that as it may, a few well-known *bodhisattvas* do make an appearance. The name Avalokiteśvara occurs only twice, in lists of *bodhisattvas* in the *CGD* and the *UP*, suggesting that for the writers of our texts he was a non-entity, but Mañjuśrī, on the other hand, appears in six texts, one of which, the *AjKV*, glorifies him in the most lavish terms. Given the heavy Perfection of Wisdom slant of most of these *sūtras*, this is not altogether surprising. The name of Maitreya also comes up fairly frequently. For all this, there is no evidence to suggest a widespread cult of the great *bodhisattvas*, and no passages recommend devotion to them. They function as symbols rather than as saviours. There is, however, evidence for the development of the cults of the Buddhas Amitābha and Akṣobhya by the late 2nd century C.E. Although the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* was not translated into Chinese until the middle of the 3rd century, the concept of rebirth in

the *buddhakṣetra* of Amitābha as a religious goal is found in the *PraS*, while the *AkTV* is entirely devoted to Akṣobhya and Abhirati. But as far as *bodhisattvas* are concerned the *initial* message of the Mahāyāna is clear: people should not worship *bodhisattvas*, they should become *bodhisattvas* themselves.[15]

We have seen something of how the identity of the different classes of Mahāyānists in relation to each other was defined. What we must now look at is how these people saw themselves as a group *vis-à-vis* other Buddhists. The first thing that strikes one when reading these early Mahāyāna *sūtras* is their extreme defensiveness. The texts fairly groan under the weight of their own self-glorification, and kalpas can tick by while one wades through chapter after chapter proclaiming the merits of this doctrine or that practice. This is not simply due to literary hyperbole, to that Indian device, in common use since the *Vedas*, of praising one thing—a god, a place, a spiritual discipline—by claiming that it is superior to all other things of that class put together. This is clearly present, and should be taken with the appropriate grain of salt. But there is more to it than that, and this is indicated by the numerous passages excoriating the detractors of the new teachings, usually portrayed as idle and perverse monks who, when they are not busy spreading base calumnies and lies about the Mahāyāna, are out breaking the precepts. That the Mahāyāna remained for a long time a minority movement in the land of its birth is confirmed by the well-known reports of Chinese pilgrims in India. In its infancy it was probably even more insignificant numerically, despite the astonishingly prolific literary creativity it gave rise to, and was therefore quite naturally on the defensive. But on the defensive against what, one might ask? Nowadays it is common practice to think of Buddhism as dividing into two schools or sects, Mahāyāna on one side and Hīnayāna, more properly a group of sects, on the other. The early *sūtras* provide no strong support for this view. True, the term *hīnayāna* is found, translated as *xiaodao*[aj] ('Small Way'), but it occurs only *four* times (*KP* 25; *DKP* 357a19; *AsPP* 426b6; *CGD* 455c15), and is thus even rarer than the term *mahāyāna*, which is itself of infrequent occurrence, as we have seen. Much more frequent are translations of the terms *srāvakayāna* ("Vehicle of the Disciples") and *pratyekabuddhayāna* ("Vehicle of the Solitary Buddhas"), or simply "Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas", which is even more common.

Pratyekabuddha is generally transcribed as *pizhifo*[ak], but in several of our texts translations appear, e.g. *yinyuanjuefo*[al] in *CGD* 454b20 (implying *pratyayabuddha*) and *yuanyijue*[am] in *AkTV* 752a11, the latter meaning "by one(self) awakened". *Śrāvaka*, on the other hand, has the literal sense of "hearer", but the standard Chinese equivalent *shengwen*[an], or "voice-hearer", seldom occurs in these early texts (e.g., *DKP* 351c20; *AjKV* 392b19). We find instead *dizi*[ao] ("disciple") or *(a)luohan*[ap], a transcription of *arhat*. In fact, in the overwhelming majority of cases *śrāvaka* is rendered as *aluohan*, and *śrāvakayāna*, which occurs less frequently, as *aluohandao*[aq], the "Way of the Arhats", a term which also does service for *arhattva* or *arhatphala*, the attainment of arhatship. I find this choice of words very significant. In his book *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection* (Delhi, 1982), Nathan Katz attempts to establish the essential identity of the *arhat* of the Pāli Canon and the *bodhisattva* of the Mahāyāna *sūtras*. In his concluding chapter he claims to have demonstrated that "the Mahāyāna texts speak in two distinct ways about the arhat. The first way of speaking is to show that the arhat is spiritually inferior to the bodhisattva; however, we have demonstrated that there is a conceptual distinction between the *śrāvaka* as one who thinks he has attained more than he actually has, and the true arhat. When speaking about the *śrāvaka* pejoratively, the standard context is in talk about meditation, and the *śrāvaka* is one who has mistakenly identified proficiency at meditation with *arahattā* itself . . . . The second way of speaking about the arhat in these early Mahāyāna texts is to identify the arhat with the bodhisattva" (Katz, 1982:275). Although I am in substantial agreement with Katz's overall thesis, and in general sympathy with any attempt to abolish imaginary discontinuities between the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna, I find that his conclusions in this particular respect rest on shaky ground, especially as regards the distinction he claims Mahāyāna *sūtras* make between *śrāvakas* and *arhats*. If our texts are anything to go by, there is no such distinction: by consistently rendering *śrāvaka* by *arhat*, Lokakṣema and his colleagues showed they were in no doubt that *śrāvakas* are both people who aspire to arhatship or *nirvāṇa* and people who actually attain that goal. Additional confirmation of this is furnished by the frequent appearance of well-

known historical *arhats*, the great *śrāvakas* Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana and others, as representatives of the supposedly inferior or partial dispensation.

Nor is there any doubt that the level these venerable figures represent, that of the *arhats* and the *pratyekabuddhas* (note that the *pratyekabuddhas* are frequently subsumed under the *arhats*), is one that is to be transcended by the *bodhisattvas* (see e.g. *AjKV* 398b4-14). A hierarchy of attainments is in fact envisaged, leading from the state of an ordinary person (Skt. *pṛthagjana*, Chinese *fanren*[41]) at the bottom, through those of a 'stream-winner' (*śrotāpanna*, *xutuohuan*[45]), a 'once-returner' (*sakṛdāgāmin*, *situohan*[41]), a 'non-returner' (*anāgāmin*, *anahan*[40]), an *arhat* and a *pratyekabuddha* to the state of a *buddha* or a *tathāgata* at the top (e.g. *DKP* 366b15-16; *AsPP* 429b4-c12).[14] In aiming for the top, *bodhisattvas*, aspirants to the full awakening of a *buddha*, are warned repeatedly not to fall back to the level of the *arhats*/*śrāvakas* and the *pratyekabuddhas* or to join their ranks, and such a regression is represented as a fearful misfortune (*DKP* 349c25-26, 350c7-11; *AkTV* 759a19-20, 760a11-12, 15-16; *AjKV* 391a19-20; *AsPP* 445b3-4, 447a14, 451b29-c22, 452a1ff.). This actually happens at one point in the *AsPP*, where 60 novice *bodhisattvas* attain arhatship despite themselves because they lack perfect wisdom and skill-in-means, in the same way that a giant bird without wings cannot help plummeting to earth from the top of Mt. Meru (*AsPP* 453c2-25). To avoid such a disaster, *bodhisattvas* must ensure that they are not contaminated by the attitudes of *arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* (*DKP* 356b1-2, c9, 365a4-12; *AkTV* 761c25-26; *AjKV* 389c3; *AsPP* 460a2-4, 463c13-14; *PraS* 903c6), and they must resist the temptation to aspire to their goals, i.e., to opt for a premature *nirvāṇa*, to "achieve realisation midway" (*AkTV* 752a11; *AsPP* 448b25-28, 458c8-22, 459b5-10, 467a13ff.; *DKP* 350c11-14; *AjKV* 392c18ff.). The *śrāvakayāna* is characterised by attachment and limitation (*AjKV* 392b19-23), and those who opt for it do so primarily out of fear of *saṃsāra*, which renders them incapable of aspiring to buddhahood (*AjKV* 394c3ff.). Not only is their courage thus inferior to that of the *bodhisattvas*, but their wisdom is too (*KP* 78-79; *LAN* 751b20-21; *AsPP* 426b2, c19-20, 427b24, 462b17). Unlike the advanced *bodhisattvas*, they have not really overcome fear and attachment; for that reason the Great Śrāvakas and arhats

Mahākāśyapa, Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāna and company are unable to resist the temptation to dance to the celestial music of King Druma; however, the novice *bodhisattvas* are equally helpless (*DKP* 351c8ff.). In another context, these great *Arhats* lament their own inferior attainments (*AjKV* 394c3-395b22). Therefore *bodhisattvas* are infinitely superior to *śrāvakas*/*arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* (*KP* 80-85, 90; *AsPP* 468a27-28; *DKP* 365c22,28). Those who teach "the Bodhisattva Path" are one's "good friends" (*kalyāṇa-mitra*), while those who direct one towards "the Paths of the Śrāvaka and the Pratyekabuddha" are "bad friends" (*pāpa-mitra*) (*KP* 13; *AsPP* 427b1-10; *DKP* 360a13-18).

Despite all this rather uncomplimentary material, however, the attitude displayed by these texts towards *arhats* is not entirely negative. Since *bodhisattvas* aspire to bring *nirvāṇa* to all sentient beings, it is not surprising that they should try to make a place for *arhats* in their picture of the world, even if it is not in the foreground. In most of our *sūtras* the great *śrāvakas*, the *bhikṣus* who were *arhats*, are present, and presumably they are not just there to act as figures of fun or to lend the proceedings an air of historical authenticity, even if these are important functions they sometimes perform. One has only to think, for example, of the role Subhūti plays in the *AsPP*. The followers of the *bodhisattva* way clearly had to face the fact that, despite all their polemics and hyperbole, they shared their membership of the *saṅgha* with people who continued to believe that arhatship was the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, who sought their own liberation above all else, and who, as members of the *saṅgha*, were still worthy of respect (e.g. *UP* 16a5-12). Therefore, even in their idealised descriptions of the *buddhakṣetras*, and in the predictions (*vyākaraṇa*) which are scattered throughout these texts, they usually envisage the peaceful co-existence of *bodhisattvas* with *śrāvakas*. Although in the buddhafield Sadāvighuṣṭa (?) in the *AjKV* (397a8) there is only a *bodhisattva-saṅgha*, and in Druma's world Candravimala in the *DKP* (362b19-21) "there are no other paths . . . only the host of *bodhisattvas*, all of the Mahāyāna" (see also *DKP* 363b9-10 for a similar case), in other instances *śrāvakas* are also present. For example, the *śrāvakas* of Akṣobhya's world Abhirati are described at length (*AkTV* 756c24-758a15), and they share that world happily with

bodhisattvas. In fact, Abhirati teems with so many *arhats* that it is described as an *arhat-kṣetra* (*AkTV* 762c5-13), while both those who follow the Śrāvakayāna and those who follow the Bodhisattvayāna there are assured of freedom from molestation by Māra (*AkTV* 755a1-3, 758b15-21, 759b24-26; see also *AjKV* 393c24-27; *AsPP* 458a26-27, 469a20-21; and *CGD* 455a4 for further examples of co-existence). In a similar vein, most of our texts carry, at particular points in the narrative, descriptions of realisations attained by various members of the audience in response to the new teachings. In these the attainment of "stream-winning" and arhatship figures prominently (e.g., *DKP* 367a27-b1; *AjKV* 406a27-b1; *KP* 138, 145, 149; *AsPP* 451a12-15, 453b29-c3; *PraS* 919b18-22; *CGD* 454b2-7; *UP* 19b24-27).

Because of the general philosophical standpoint of the Perfection of Wisdom literature, one would expect to find in these early texts at least some acknowledgement of the purely conventional nature of the distinctions we have been talking about. The *AsPP*, for one, makes such an acknowledgement, conceding that all the grades of attainment from *śrotāpatti* to buddhahood partake of the same fundamental "suchness" (*tathatā*), in which there are no distinctions (450a4-8), that all these grades spring from the Perfection of Wisdom (451a17-24), and that in terms of "suchness" neither the three vehicles (of *śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas* and *buddhas*) *nor* the one vehicle can be apprehended (454a18-29). Consequently *bodhisattvas* should not think of themselves as far from the attainments of *arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* and close to buddhahood (466b13-c14).

For all that, distinctions *are* set up in these texts. The issues are extremely complex, and the evidence is equivocal, but not so equivocal as to support Katz's contention that the much-maligned *śrāvakas* of these early Mahāyāna *sūtras* were merely conceited monks who mistook their own meditational attainments for final liberation, not full *arhats*—or his claim that *bodhisattvas* and *arhats* are essentially the same. This may in fact be so, but that is not what the texts say. What they do tell us is that the early adherents of the Bodhisattvayāna—who were probably very much in the minority—were prepared to go to great lengths to uphold their ideal against what they conceived to be the traditional goal of Buddhist practice, namely arhatship or *nirvāṇa* for oneself alone, but they were not prepared to write

off the rest of the Buddhist *saṅgha* or sever their own connection with it by the wholesale use of such terms as "Hīnayāna" and "Mahāyāna" as sectarian categories. It is interesting to compare this situation with that which currently obtains in Burma, a supposedly Theravādin country. In his *Buddhism and Society* (2nd ed., University of California Press, Berkeley, 1982), pp. 61-63, Melford Spiro notes the long tradition in Burma of aspiration to buddhahood, and the presence of a small number of people who, without bringing in any notions of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, refer to themselves as *hpaya laung* ("Embryo Buddhas"), i.e. *bodhisattvas*,[15] Can this be a distant echo of the state of affairs that once existed in India, before followers of "the Bodhisattva Path" started to cut themselves off from their fellow Buddhists, and before the distinction between the two 'vehicles' was anything more than a different perception of the goal of the religious life?

Turning now to other religious paths, we find that there is nothing unequivocal about the attitude displayed in these texts towards them. The usual designation for these paths is *waidao*[av], "outside ways", although *yudao*[aw] ("other ways"), *yidao*[ax] ("different ways") and *xiedao*[ay] ("heretical ways") are also found (as well as combinations of these, with or without *ren*[az] added), rendering a number of Sanskrit terms such as *lokāyata* (*KP* 5, 111), *dṛṣṭikṛta* (*KP* 18), *dṛṣṭigata* (*KP* 65, 109), *parapravādin* (*KP* 95), *anyatīrthya-parivrājaka* (*AsPP* 433c21ff.) and so on. These non-Buddhist ways are not to be followed by the *bodhisattva* (*DKP* 356c7, 357a7-8; *AjKV* 398a22, 406a6; *PraS* 910c11, 912b29, 915a26, 916c7-8; *UP* 16a15-16), but rejected and overcome (*DKP* 357c4; *PraS* 911c5), their followers ideally being brought within the Buddhist fold (*DKP* 358c20-21, 359a25-28). Their defeat is often closely linked with the defeat of Māra (*DKP* 348c15, 362a17). Several *sūtras* go beyond these vague generalities, and urge followers of the Bodhisattvayāna not to sacrifice to or worship the gods, but go only to the Triple Gem for refuge (*DKP* 361b15-16; *PraS* 910c10-12; *UP* 17a20-21; *AsPP* 454b25-27, 455c9). However, only one text, the *WWP*, goes into any detail on any non-Buddhist religious practices—in this case brahmanical ritual (438a10ff.). The evidence is slim, but what there is suggests that the Bodhisattvayāna demanded that its adherents devote themselves exclusively to Buddhism, and regarded other faiths as beyond the pale.

Bringing all our findings together, we can make the following observations. The point of view presented in the earliest Chinese translations of Mahāyāna *sūtras* is most probably that of Mahāyānist *bhikṣus*. For this group *bodhisattvas* were certainly not just semi-mythical beings raised on high to receive the adoration of the masses, but real flesh-and-blood people, among whom they counted themselves, who had conceived the *bodhicitta*, the aspiration for awakening, and were pursuing the appropriate course of training either in the monastic context or in the household life. There is no sign at all of any cult of the "Celestial Bodhisattvas"; this was probably a later development. As far as these *bodhisattva-bhikṣus* were concerned, women were part of the movement, and the new teachings were addressed to them as well as to men. At the same time the texts reveal that women were not regarded as in all respects the spiritual equals of men. If this kind of attitude was enshrined in the *sūtras*, which, after all, embody the theories and ideals of the movement, it is hardly likely that in practice the women who followed the Mahāyāna fared any better than their Śrāvakayāna sisters. The Mahāyāna takes a hard line against other faiths, in theory at any rate, but its attitude to the rest of the Buddhist fold is characterised by ambivalence and defensiveness, and it gives every appearance of being a minority movement struggling to maintain the authenticity and validity of its teachings with a truly prodigious degree of polemical 'overkill'. It may well be the case that in its attack on the *arhat*-ideal the Mahāyāna was setting up a straw man, but this is not the place to decide whether the attainments of the *bodhisattvayānika* and the *śrāvakayānika* were essentially identical. Buddhahood may or may not be the same as arhatship, but it is certain that the followers of the Mahāyāna placed a higher premium on aspiration to it, which implies that they perceived a difference. What is equally certain is that Buddhism was (and still is) plagued by a problem. We could call it the problem of the "ever-receding ideal". In Gautama's own time, many hundreds of people attained arhatship like him. Four or five hundred years later, when the Buddha had grown idealised and remote, and *arhats* were few and far between, many people vowed to attain awakening, and thereby became *bodhisattvas*. One wonders how many centuries passed before even bodhisattvahood became as remote an ideal as buddhahood, and the goal had to be reformulated anew. Perhaps,

however, it is in the nature of religious systems not only to undergo continual transformation and renewal, but also to present us with ideals which are always just out of reach, with paradises that shimmer on the margins of possibility, and with vehicles which we know we could all ride to salvation, if only we could catch up with them and climb aboard.

NOTES

1. See e.g., H. Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1932), pp. 45, 222-225; R. Robinson & W. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (3rd ed., Wadsworth, Belmont, 1982), pp. 74-75; E. Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1951), pp. 87-88, 120; D. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy* (University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1976), pp. 121-126; N. Katz, *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1982), p. 280.

2. This is the view of Dayal (see *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, pp. 31, 35), whose work has had a seminal effect on this area of study. Dayal's understanding of the *bodhisattva*-ideal is reflected in the writings of many other scholars. A particularly good example is T. Ling, *The Buddha* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1976), pp. 19-20:

> Later on in India a form of Buddhism emerged, alongside the Theravada, which was characterised by beliefs in, and practices associated with, heavenly beings who possessed superhuman spiritual power, and who were known as Bodhisattvas . . . . In both senses of the word religion (belief in spiritual beings *and* belief in the sacred), the Bodhisattva school of Buddhism . . . was a religious system . . . . For Mahayana Buddhism the sacred has its special focus in the heavenly realm where dwell the Bodhisattvas, the superhuman spiritual beings who are said to exert their influence to help poor struggling mortals. In directing their attention to this supramundane heavenly community the Mahayanists showed themselves correspondingly less concerned with the need to order the earthly society of men in such a way that would facilitate the pursuit of the Buddhist life, and would enhance and encourage human effort. More reliance on heavenly power meant that less attention needed to be given to earthly factors. The Mahayanists became more concerned with devotions to the heavenly beings, with ritual and speculation, and less with the nature of the civilization in which they lived.

See also pp. 202-203, 242-247.

3. See E. Zürcher, "A New Look at the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Texts", an unpublished paper delivered at the Leiden Symposium on State, Ideology and Justice in Early Imperial China, 1-5 Sept., 1975, also his "Late Han Vernacular Elements in the Earliest Buddhist Translations", *Journal of the Chinese Language Teachers Association*, XII, 3 (Oct. 1977), pp. 177-203, to

both of which articles I am considerably indebted. See also my own unpublished paper "The Earliest Chinese Translations of Mahāyāna Buddhist Sūtras: Some Notes on the Works of Lokakṣema".

4. T. = Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaikyoku, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, 100 vols. (Tokyo, 1924-35). Throughout this paper references to the texts will be to page, lateral column and line of the *Taishō* edition, except in the case of No. 8, the *Kāśyapa-parivarta*, where citations will be according to the sections of von Stäel-Holstein's edition.

5. On the epigraphical evidence, which tends to corroborate one of the findings of the present paper, see G. Schopen, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions", *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 21 (1979) pp. 1-19.

6. These phonetic transcriptions (*biqiu biqiuni*, etc.), which later became standard in Chinese translations of Buddhist *sūtras*, are used throughout our group of texts, except that in Redaction B of the *PraS upāsaka* is also rendered as *qingxinshi*[ba] ("man of pure faith") and *upāsikā* as *qingxinnü*[bb] ("woman of pure faith"), while non-standard translations of all four terms are found in *CGD* and *UP*.

7. Lokakṣema's use of *qiu* ("seek") before his transcription of *mahāyāna-saṃprasthita* is redundant but revealing (since it puts women one step further back from full participation), otherwise the accuracy of his translation is confirmed by the Tibetan text of the *PraS*, 10A and 12A: *theg-pa chen-po-la yang-dag-par zhugs-pa'i dge-slong-ma* (or *dge-bsnyen-ma*).

8. On the use of these terms see D. Paul, *Women in Buddhism* (Asian Humanities Press, Berkeley, 1979), pp. 106-110.

9. In Chap. XIX of the Sanskrit text of the *AsPP* this figure appears as Gaṅgadevā or Gaṅgadevī Bhaginī, i.e. "the woman Gaṅgadevī". Although E. Conze in his English translation of the *sūtra* (*op. cit.*, pp. 219-221) calls her a 'Goddess' or 'Goddess of the Ganges', a lead which D. Paul follows in her version of the passage (*op. cit.*, pp. 180-184), this woman is no more a goddess than Āryadeva is a god. Gaṅgadevī's story, however, later produced some interesting echoes, when the *AsPP*'s prediction that she would attain awakening as a male was frustrated, as it were, by the Tibetan tradition. The *rnam-thar* of Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal (757-817), one of the chief consorts of Padmasambhava, lists Gaṅgadevī as one of the previous incarnations of that famous Tibetan *yoginī*: see K. Dowman, *Sky Dancer* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1984), p. 6 and Tarthang Tulku, *Mother of Knowledge* (Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1983), p. 11 (both translators appear to perpetuate the erroneous divinisation, but I have not been able to check the Tibetan text myself). Since Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal is similarly identified with the unnamed merchant's daughter who befriends the *bodhisattva* Sadāprarudita in Chaps. XXX-XXXI of the *AsPP*, the author of the *rnam-thar* is clearly attempting to link her with Prajñāpāramitā herself.

10. See *AsPP* 427b29-c2, c27, 429b6-7 for occurrences of this term with *bodhisattva* and *mahāsaṃnāha-saṃnaddha*.

11. On this general theme see N. Schuster, "Changing the Female Body: Wise Women and the Bodhisattva Career in Some *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtras*", *JIABS*, 4, 1 (1981), pp. 24-69.

12. See e.g., Robinson and Johnson, *op.cit.*, p. 78.

13. This point is, in my view, not invalidated by the existence of such passages as *KP* 88, which claims that just as the new moon is more worthy of homage (*namaskāra*) than the full, so too *bodhisattvas* are more worthy of homage than the Buddhas. When taken in context, this hyperbolic glorification of the *bodhisattva*-path can hardly be construed as a 'call to worship'.

14. For different renderings of some of these grades, see *UP* 16a6–8.

15. Spiro's understanding of the *bodhisattva*-ideal as one which "permits salvation to be achieved by a mechanical process—the transfer of merit from Bodhisattva to devotee" and "demands no personality transformation" (*op.cit.*, p. 62) is, as we have seen, wide of the mark, at least as far as the early Mahāyāna is concerned. The supposed "misreadings" of the *bodhisattva* doctrine which he imputes to the Burmese (see esp. p. 63, n. 33) are perfectly compatible with our early *sūtras*.

CHINESE GLOSSARY

a. 道行般若經
b. 般舟三昧經
c. 佗真陀羅所問如來三昧經
d. 阿闍世王經
e. 兜沙經
f. 內藏百寶經
g. 文殊師利問菩薩署經
h. 遺日摩尼寶經
i. 阿閦佛國經
j. 成具光明定意經
k. 法鏡經
l. 學訶衍
m. 大道
n. 菩薩道
o. 行菩薩道者
p. 行(求)菩薩道者
q. 菩薩
r. 開士
s. 明士
t. 四輩弟子
u. 四部弟子
v. 比丘比丘尼優婆塞優婆夷
w. 菩薩欲愛欲作比丘
x. 比丘尼求摩訶衍三拔致
y. 白衣菩薩居家修道
z. 優婆夷求摩訶衍三拔致
aa. 比丘菩薩
ab. 開士去家為(修)道
ac. 明士除惡
ad. 去家
ae. 在家
af. 居家
ag. 白衣
ah. 善男子善女人
ai. 怛竭
aj. 小道
ak. 辟支佛
al. 因緣覺佛
am 緣一覺
an. 聲聞
ao. 弟子
ap. (阿)羅漢
aq. 阿羅漢道
ar. 凡人
as. 須陀洹
at. 斯陀含
au. 阿那含
av. 外道
aw. 餘道
ax. 異道
ay. 邪道
az. 人
ba. 清信士
bb. 清信女

134/4

The Inscription on the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India

by Gregory Schopen

I.

In August, 1977, an inscribed image pedestal was recovered from Govindnagar, on the western outskirts of Mathurā City,[1] which made available for the first time Indian epigraphical evidence for the early phases of that "movement" which we have come to call "the Mahāyāna." The inscription contained an unambiguous reference to the Buddha Amitābha and what appears to be an early form of the donative formula invariably associated with the Mahāyāna in later inscriptions (see below p.120). It also contained a precise date: "the 26th year of the Great King Huveṣka." Assuming that 78 A.D. marked the beginning of the Kaniṣka Era, this would give 104 A.D.[2]

The significance of this find is clear if it is kept in mind that the earliest known occurrences of the term *mahāyāna* in Indian inscriptions all date to the 5th/6th century: one from Gunaighar, in Bengal, dated 596 A.D., one from Jayarampur, in Orissa, ascribed to the 5th or beginning of the 6th century—both of which also refer to Avalokiteśvara—and a fragmentary inscription from Ajaṇṭā.[3] The earliest known epigraphical reference to Amitābha prior to the Govindnagar inscription occurred in a fragmentary slab inscription from Sāñcī which Majumdar dated to the end of the 7th century, and even here the reference is not to an independent image of Amitābha but occurs in what appears to have been an extended hymn of praise to Avalokiteśvara.[4] Moreover, the "classical" Mahāyāna donative formula occurred nowhere before the 4th/5th century.[5] At Mathurā itself

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the term Mahāyāna does not occur at all, and, again prior to the Govindnagar inscription, the earliest Mathurān inscriptional reference to a Mahāyāna figure that we knew occurred in a 5th century epigraph and was to Avalokiteśvara.[6] At Mathurā, as everywhere else, the earliest occurrence of the Mahāyāna donative formula cannot be dated before the 4th/5th century. The Govindnagar inscription therefore predates anything else that we had for "the Mahāyāna"—whether from Mathurā or from India as a whole—by at least two or three centuries.

Happily, the importance of the Govindnagar inscription was almost immediately recognized and it was quickly published by H. Nakamura, B.N. Mukherjee, and by R.C. Sharma more than once.[7] Several art historians also were quick to utilize it. J.C. Huntington, on several occasions, J. Guy and S.J. Czuma have all referred to it as evidence for their individual arguments.[8] I myself have discussed it very briefly in terms of its relationship to the "classical" Mahāyāna donative formula.[9]

Unhappily, the two most widely and easily available editions of the inscription differ markedly at crucial points. Neither is altogether reliable and both are in different ways misleading. A good deal of the second line and both the beginning and end of the fourth line, are—along with individual *akṣaras* elsewhere—not well preserved, but neither Mukherjee nor Sharma is very careful in indicating this. Sharma in particular has made a number of *silent* "corrections" and emendations in his text of the inscription. Mukherjee does this as well, but in addition he omits syllables, and in one case an entire word, from his text. These silent "corrections," emendations and omissions have, of course, misled on occasion those who have used either edition, myself included. But the sometimes misleading editions account only in part for the fact that several scholars have tried to get out of the inscription much more than is in it, and have overlooked much of what it actually contained. This, it seems, is a result of the fact that the inscription has not been read and interpreted in anything like its proper context. At the very least it has to be read as a piece of Kuṣān epigraphy and evaluated and interpreted in comparison with other Kuṣān inscriptions from Mathurā, as well as contemporary or near contemporary inscriptions from—especially—Gandhāra, and other Buddhist sites.

Before the inscription can be properly evaluated, therefore, two things are required: the text it contains must be reliably edited; and the text then must be fixed firmly in the context of the other Buddhist epigraphs that are contemporary with it, and both preceded and followed it, not only at Mathurā, but in Gandhāra and at the other Indian Buddhist sites as well. I have attempted to do both here.

II.

My edition of the inscription is based on both the published photographs[10] and on a set of photographs taken by my colleague John Huntington who very kindly sent them to me and, thereby, made it possible for me to disagree with some of his conclusions. My edition is—in part as a reaction to those already published—a conservative one. I have tried to avoid "reconstructions" or emendations unless there was very strong support from known parallels. This has resulted in something less than a "perfect" text, but it is, in compensation, a text which I hope is at least an accurate reflexion of what remains on the stone and of what can legitimately be taken as certain.

The Text:

L. 1 *mah(ā)rajasya huveṣkas[y]a (saṃ) 20 6 va 2 di 20 6*

L. 2 *(etaye pu[r]vaye) sax-cakasya satthavahasya p[i]t[-x](ṇ)[-x] balakattasya śreṣṭhasya nāttikena*

L. 3 *buddha(pi)la(na) putra(ṇ)a nāgarakṣitena bhagavato buddhasya amitābhasya pratimā pratiṣṭh(ā)pi[tā](. . .)*

L. 4 *[Sa](rva)buddhapujāye im(e)na k(u)śalam(ū)lena sar(va)(sat)[v]ā anut(t)ara(ṃ) bud(dh)ajñāṇaṃ prā(pnva)ṃ(tu)(. . .)*

Notes to the Text

(These "notes," in fact the rest of section II, may be skipped by those *few* readers who are not particularly interested in the paleography or the minutiae of Indian Epigraphy. It is here, however, that I justify my reading of the inscription and indicate my understanding of its grammar.)

Line 1.

M reads the king's name as *Huvash(ka)s(ya)*, S[11] as *Huviṣkasya*,

but there can be little doubt that the second *akṣara* is *-ve-*. The *akṣara* in our inscription is virtually identical with the *akṣara* read by Lüders as *-ve-*, again in the name of the same king, in *MI* No. 180. There in fact Lüders says of this *akṣara* that it "is distinctly *-ve-*" (p. 206 n.2; cf. *MI* No. 176 and *BI*, pl. I (List No. 125, from Mathurā), both *-vedika*). The *-y-* of *-sya* has been lost where a bit of stone has been chipped off.

Although indistinct the *saṃ* is fairly sure and—although S at first read *20 8*—the *20 6* is virtually certain (cf. esp. *MI* No. 72 and Ojha pl. LXXI, top column 3).

M. reads the month as *(va)4*. Though somewhat faint the *va* is sure, but M's *4* is unsupportable. S, oddly enough, does not read any number at all after *va* in his edition, although his translation "of the second month" presupposes a 2. In fact, though faint, a numeral *2* after *va* is fairly sure.

Line 2

The first part of line 2 is difficult to read. As a result of the fact that the stone has been rounded off the upper portion of the first six or eight *akṣaras* has been lost, as well as the vowel signs for several other *akṣaras* in the line. Numerous parallels from Mathurā would lead us to expect, immediately after the date, something like *etasyāṃ pūrvvayam* (*MI* No. 15), *asyaṃ purvayyam* (*MI* No. 30), *etasa purvāya* (*MI* No. 150), etc. S reads *etasya pūrvaya*, but the conjunct *-sya* occurs four times in this line and a comparison of the third *akṣara* in the line with any of these makes it virtually certain that it cannot be that. M's (*ye*) is much more likely. It is virtually certain that the following *akṣara* is *pu-*, not *pū-*. As a close parallel for my (*etaye purvaye*) *MI* No. 182—*etaye purvay[e]*—may be cited.

The next four *akṣaras*, which appear to constitute the first proper name, are relatively sure except for the second which is a conjunct. S reads *satvakasya*, but his *-tva-*, as a glance at the numerous instances of that conjunct in Kuṣān inscriptions at Mathurā would indicate, is extremely unlikely. The bottom portion is almost certainly *-c-*, the upper portion could be any of several letters *-ṇ,t,n-* but almost certainly not *-ñ-*. M read *sañcha(?)kasya*. It appears impossible to interpret the *akṣara* satisfactorily in its present state.

M's reading of the next five *akṣaras* as *satthavāhasya*, seems—

apart from the long *ā* after *v*—sure (cf. *EHS* 68). S's *sārthavāhasya* does not correspond with what can be read on the stone, especially for the second of these *akṣaras*, and is essentially a silent "normalization."

The next three *akṣaras* are very problematic. In additon to the fact that virtually all vowel markers that would have occurred above the *akṣaras* have been rounded off, the stone on which the second and third of these *akṣaras* are written is both abraded and chipped. There appears to be a trace of an i-*mātrā* on the first *akṣara*, but it is far from certain. Neither S's *pautreṇa* nor M's *pūtṛiṇa* is verifiable, but we would expect here the instrumental of a term of relationship. *Pitṛṇā*, which is attested in literary sources, is possible and might be reconciled with what remains of the *akṣaras* (*BHSG* para. 13.38), but *pitṛṇā* in epigraphical sources has generally been interpreted as gen. pl. (*EHS* 118–19).

My reading of the remainder of line 2 agrees with M. S's *k(ī)rtasya śreṣṭhisya nātikenā* does not correspond with what is clearly readable in the photographs.

Line 3.

The first two syllables of line 3 are fairly surely *buddha-* but a vertical groove has been worn right through the middle of the third *akṣara*. Enough remains of this *akṣara* to suggest a *p-* with what appears to be a fairly distinct i-*mātrā*. Then follows a *l-* without—as far as I can see—any vowel *mātrā*, which is followed in turn by what appears to be (*na*). If, as seems to be the case, this is yet another proper name, it has no case ending. S reads *buddha balena*, but that the fourth *akṣara* is not *-le-* is clear if it is compared with the certain *-le-* in the middle of the next line. Moreover we would expect a gen. here not an inst. M in fact has read a gen., *buddhabalasya*, but he seems to query it, and that the fifth *akṣara* is *-sya* is extremely unlikely, as a comparison with the numerous clear instances of *-sya* in our inscription will show.

Similar difficulties are also encountered in the next word. S reads *putreṇa*, but I can see no e-mātrā after *-tr-*, although the last syllable could be read *-ṇe*. M reads *putraṇa*, but this, like my *putra(ṇ)a*, creates grammatical problems. We should expect here, of course, an inst.

Fortunately, the rest of line 3 is clear. M reads the donor's name as *Sāmraksh(ī)tena*, but this is wrong. *Nāgarakṣitena* is certain and so S has read it.

M omits *-sya* after *buddha-*, but this probably resulted from a slip of the pen. It is very clear in the photographs.

M has assumed that the *-pi* of *pratiṣṭh(ā)pi[tā]* was the last *akṣara* written in line 3. He reads the first extant *akṣara* of line 4 then as *-ta*. But this, as we shall see, is not possible. S assumes, on the other hand, that at least one syllable has been lost at the end of line 3 and reads *pratiṣṭhāpi(tā)*. The intended reading is, of course, not in doubt. That a *-tā* in fact or intention followed *pratiṣṭh(ā)pi-* is virtually certain (cf. *MI* Nos. 4, 23, 27, 29, 74, 94, etc.). What is not certain is if more than one *akṣara* has been lost at the end of line 3. This is compounded by the fact that at least one syllable also seems to have been lost at the beginning of line 4.

Line 4.

The fourth and final line presents a number of difficulties, and the readings of M and S differ markedly. Both the beginning and end of the line are damaged, the corners of the base apparently having again gotten rounded off and the stone somewhat abraded. The bottom portion of several *akṣaras* has also been lost by the same process. It is not certain whether line 4 began with the first extant *akṣara*. In fact, there are some indications that at least one syllable has been lost at the beginning of the line. To judge from what remains of the inscription, each line began more or less at the same distance from the edge of the stone—although line 1 may have been slightly indented. The first *akṣara* of each line appears to have been written more or less directly beneath the first *akṣara* of the line immediately above it. If this had been the case for line 4 as well, it would appear very likely that one *akṣara* has disappeared. M has ignored this possibility, as well as the possibility that one or more *akṣaras* have been lost at the end of line 3. He reads the first extant *akṣara* of line 4 as *ta* and takes it as the final syllable of the *pratiṣṭh(ā)pi-* which now ends line 3. But this is not just problematic in terms of the likelihood of syllables having been lost *both* at the end of line 3 *and* at the beginning of line 4; it is also problematic from a strictly palaeographic point-of-view.

The *akṣara* in question cannot possibly be *ta*. Several very clear examples of *-t-* occur in our inscription, with a variety of vowel *mātrās*, and a comparison of the first *akṣara* of line 4 with any of these clearly rules it out. In fact it is virtually certain that this first *akṣara* is a conjunct. The lower part of the *akṣara* looks like a Roman V laid on its right side. If the bottom of the "v" were clearly closed to form a triangle—this is not perfectly clear in the photographs—this could only be taken as a Brāhmī *v*. The likelihood that the lower part of our *akṣara* is indeed a Brāhmī *v* is supported in fact by a number of considerations. On at least two other occasions—in (*purvaye*) in line 2, in *bhagavato* in line 3—our scribe has written his *v* in much the same way. In these instances, too, what should be the right leg of the triangle, if it is there at all, is not at all strongly cut (this is especially the case in the Huntington photos). Oddly enough the upper part of our *akṣara* also confirms the strong likelihood that the lower part is a *v*. It cannot easily be anything else than a superscribed *-r-*, and our scribe uses exactly the same, somewhat distinctive, form of superscribed *-r-* when he attaches it—again to *v*—in the damaged but certain *sarva-* later in this same line. A very similar form—again attached to *v*—can be seen in at least two other inscriptions from Mathurā dated in Huviṣka's reign (*MI* Nos. 31 and 126).

If, however, the first extant *akṣara* of line 4 is *rva*—and this seems fairly sure—then it is equally sure that this cannot be the beginning of the first word of the line. Something had to have preceded it either in this line or at the end of line 3, and this is just one more indication that at least one or more syllables have been lost. If numerous parallels from Mathurā allow us to be fairly sure that one of these lost syllables was the final *ta* of *pratiṣṭh(ā)pi[tā]*, other but equally numerous parallels allow us to be equally sure of what another of those syllables was.

There is no doubt about the five *akṣaras* that follow (*rva*) in line 4. They can only be read as *-buddhapujāye*, although both M and S read *-pū-*. With the virtual certainty that at least one syllable—and probably more—came before (*rva*) we would then have: *x(rva)buddhapujāye*. Just this much makes it virtually certain that the intended reading was some form of a formula that occurs in at least nine Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions[12] and, more importantly, in at least eight other inscriptions from Mathurā. The

formula occurs as *sarva[p]uddhapūjārt[th]a[m]* in *MI* No. 29 (dated in the 51st year of Huviṣka); as *sarvabudhapujāye* in *MI* No. 80 (classified by Lüders as Kṣatrapa); as *sarvabudhap(u)[ja](y)e* in *MI* No. 86 (also classified by Lüders as Kṣatrapa); it also occurs in *MI* No. 89 (which Lüders classifies as Śuṅga) as *savabūdhānaṃ pūjāya*; as *sa[r]va(bu)[dha]pūcaye* in *MI* No. 123 (dated in the 270th year of an unspecified era but again classified by Lüders as Kṣatrapa); as *[sa]rvabuddhapūjāye* in *MI* No. 157 (dated in the 16th year of Kaniṣka); as *sarvabudhapujāye* in *MI* No. 187; and as *savabudhapujaye* in an inscription recently discovered at Vrindāban. The same basic formula also occurs as *savabudhānāṃ pujāye* in an inscription from Kauśāmbī "in Brāhmī characters of about the first century A.D.;" as *savabudhapūjāya* in a Brāhmī inscription from Nasik; and as *sarvabudhānaṃ pujatham* in a 1st century inscription from Śrāvastī.[15]

These parallels indicate that the formula *sarvabuddhapūjāye* had a wide geographic distribution in the first centuries of the Common Era and that it was an attested set phrase in Mathurān inscriptions both before our inscription (in perhaps both the Śuṅga and Kṣatrapa periods, and in the 16th year of Kaniṣka) and shortly after it (in the 51st year of Huviṣka). This frequent and attested occurrence of the formula at Mathurā, taken together with the still extant *akṣaras* in our inscription, makes it virtually certain that a *sa-* in fact or intention preceded the (*rva*) at the beginning of line 4, and that the whole should be reconstructed as *[sa](rva)buddhapujāye*. S, too, reads *sarva* at the beginning of the line—(*sarva*) *buddha pūjāye*— but he does so with no indication of the problems involved and without any supportive argument. This is not only methodologically unacceptable, but in regard to this particular formula it is especially unsatisfactory. The presence of this formula in our inscription is—as we shall see—extremely important for what it can tell us about the early history of that "movement" we now call "the Mahāyāna."

The three *akṣaras* that follow *[sa](rva)buddhapujāye* are, apart from the vowel *mātrā* of *m-*, clear and unproblematic. M's *(I)Imina* is at least in part almost certainly the result of a printing error, i.e., i for e; but his (*I*) and his capitalization are inexplicable. S reads *imena* and this is undoubtedly correct although the e-*mātrā* of *m-* is not absolutely sure, especially on the Huntington photographs.

M and S read the next six *akṣaras* in exactly the same way except in regard to the length of the *-u* attached to *m-*. S read it as short, M as long. In fact the u-*mātrā* here—as well as in the case of the *k-* which begins this collocation—is simply not clear. In both cases the u-*mātrā* would have occurred beneath the *akṣaras* in places which have now been chipped or rounded off.

Both M and S read the next two *akṣaras* as *sarva*. The *sa-* is sure and the following *akṣara*, though damaged, is almost certainly *-rva-*. It has almost exactly the same upper portion as the first extant *akṣara* of the line, the same elongated vertical stroke and the same—though slightly shorter—horizontal top bar, here sandwiched between the bottoms of two *akṣaras* in the line above it. The left leg and the start of the bottom stroke of a Brāhmī *v* are clear underneath it, but again, as with the first extant *akṣara* of the line, little trace of the stroke that should have formed the right leg is discernible, although the stone in part has been chipped away here.

After *sa(rva)-* M reads (*satana*) and S (*satvā*). As the use of parentheses by both would suggest, the stone has to a large degree peeled away here and the reading is not entirely sure. It is, however, certain that there were only two *akṣaras* here and that, as a consequence, M's (*satana*) is impossible. What remains of the two *akṣaras* is fairly surely the upper part of a *sa-* and the upper part of a *tā*. The long *ā-mātrā* attached to the *t* is quite distinct. *-(sat)[v]ā* can therefore be accepted with reasonable certainty and this, in turn, is a reading of some significance: *sar(va)(sat)[v]ā* can hardly be anything but the grammatical subject of this final sentence.

The next four *akṣaras* are almost certainly *anut(t)ara(ṃ)*. The right leg of the subjoined *-t-* in the third *akṣara* has been chipped away, but enough remains to indicate its former presence. Apart from this, the only question is whether there is an *anusvāra* after *-ra*. In Professor Huntington's photographs, as well as in those published by S, a dot above and slightly to the left of the *-ra* appears to be fairly sure, although it is not so well defined as the one above the *na* that occurs a few *akṣaras* later in this same line. Moreover, its placement to the left of the *ra* is easily accounted for: there is a subscribed *-y-* on the *akṣara* immediately above the *ra* which takes up the space where the *anusvāra* would normally go. Although neither S or M reads an *anusvāra*, I think

it probable that we must. Note that the following compound—which *anuttara* would modify—ends in a clear *anusvāra*.

There are very clearly four *akṣaras* after *anut(t)ara(ṃ)*. M has unaccountably read only the last two. He reads only *jñānaṃ*. S reads *buddha jñānaṃ*, and while *-jñānaṃ* is virtually certain—the *-ñ-* is, however, only partially visible—the *dh-* of *buddha-*, if indeed it had been present, has all but disappeared. The collocation *buddha* occurs three other times in our inscription. A comparison of our two *akṣaras* in line 4 with these other occurrences would seem to suggest that the original reading in line 4 was *buda-* only. Note that in the other occurrences the *dh-* is attached to the *d-* in such a way that it occurs on exactly the same level as the *u-mātrā* of the preceding *bu-*. This was clearly not the case here. It is, of course, not unlikely that even if the original reading was *buda-* this was only a scribal error for *buddha-*. Unfortunately there are no parallels to help us out here. The "classical" form of the formula involving *anuttara-jñāna*, though frequent, is much later, and apart from two exceptions there is never anything between *anuttara-* and *-jñāna*. One of the exceptions referred to occurs in an inscription on the base of a small bronze image of the Buddha from Dhanesar Khera. Smith and Hoey say that the inscription is "probably not later than A.D. 400, and certainly not later than A.D. 500." Sircar dates it to "about the beginning of the fifth century A.D."[14] Here instead of the "classical" *anuttara-jñāna* the inscription has *anuttara-pada-jñāna*. It is then just possible, but only that, that *buda*—if that was the original reading in our line 4—may have been a scribal error not for *buddha-*, but for *pada*. This, however, seems unlikely. The other exception—a 7th century inscription on a small bronze Buddha from the Terai area of Southeastern Nepal—indirectly supports the reading *bud(dh)a-*. It inserts not *buddha-*, but a comparable epithet, *sarvajña*, between *anuttara-* and *-jñāna*: *[a]nuttara-sarvva-jña-jñānāvāptaye*.[15]

The final *akṣaras* of the line present serious problems. There are at least three *akṣaras* which are extant—in whole or in part—after *-jñānaṃ*. It is possible that there were more: the bottom right hand corner of the front of the pedestal has been knocked entirely off. Of the three that remain, only the first *akṣara* is clearly readable, and even it is slightly damaged. Confronted with this situation, we should not be surprised that the readings

of both S and M are conjectural. S reads (*śrāvitaṃ*), but this not only does not make any sense grammatically, it is also completely irreconcilable with what remains of the *akṣaras*. A glance at *śreṣṭhasya* in line 2, or *kuśala-* in line 4 makes it unmistakably clear that the first of our final *akṣaras* cannot possibly be *śra-* nor involve a palatal *ś* in any way. Moreover, the second of these *akṣaras*—however it be read—is just as clearly a conjunct. These considerations make it certain that S's reading must be rejected. M's reading—"*prāṭp(i)ṁ* (should be *prāptiṁ*) *(bha)(va)(tu)*"—has the merit of being in part at least more reconcilable with what remains of the *akṣaras*, but it too is problematic. If—as seems fairly surely the case—*sar(va)(sat)[v]ā* is the subject of the sentence, then M's *(bha)(va)(tu)* will not work. For it to do so it would have to be plural and we would have to have a complement that would express a state of being or condition as in, for example, a 4th or 5th century inscription from Kanheri where we find: *anena sarvvasatvā buddhā bhavantu*.[16] Moreover, the last remaining *akṣara* in line 4 would have to have been *bha* to fit M's reading, but enough remains to make it certain that it could not have been that (cf. *bha*, twice in line 3).

Again, if *sar(va)(sat)[v]ā* is subject of the final sentence of our inscription, then *anut(t)ara(ṃ) bud(dh)ajñānaṃ* would appear to be not nominative neuters, but accusatives, and therefore the objects of a transitive verb—*bud(dh)ajñānaṃ* as a *bahuvrīhi* seems very unlikely. The numerous—though later—"classical" occurences of *anuttarajñāna-* in Buddhist inscriptions, though always in compound, might also lead us to expect an accusative construction, although in these occurrences *anuttarajñāna-* is invariably constructed as the object of some form of a derivative of √*āp* in a genitive *tatpuruṣa*: *anuttarajñānāvāptaye*. We would expect then that the final *akṣaras* of line 4 contained a transitive verb. Moreover, since our inscription most certainly does not read *sarvasatvena* or *sarvasatvānām* or the like, but almost certainly *sarvasatvā*, we would also expect that transitive verb to be finite, and the Kanheri inscription just cited, as well as everything we know about the syntax of Buddhist donative inscriptions would lead us to expect further that that finite transitive verb would have been perhaps in the optative, more probably in the imperative mood. Finally, both context and the numerous later occurrences of *anuttarajñāna* would make it fairly sure that the

finite, probably imperative verb that ended our inscription was probably a derivative of the root $\sqrt{āp}$. These expectations can be to at least some degree reconciled with what remains of the *akṣaras*.

The first of the final remaining *akṣaras* in line 4, though slightly damaged, is almost certainly *prā-*. One can compare it with *prā-* in *MI* Nos. 46, 74, 124, 133, and 178, and with the two occurrences of *pra-* in the line immediately above it. The second *akṣara*—which M read as *-tp(i)ṁ* and corrected to *-ptiṁ*—is again almost certainly a conjunct, one element of which appears to be a *-p-*. The *anusvāra*, if that is what it is, is not placed directly above the *akṣara*, although there is ample room for it there, but above the space between the *akṣara* and the one that follows it. Only a fraction of the last *akṣara* remains. It might, but only very conjecturally, be taken as a *t-*. Taken together, this would allow us to read *prāx-(p)-x-ṃ(t)-x*, which with the greatest reserve might be reconstructed as *prā(pnva)ṃt(u)*. Such a reconstruction would at least conform to what remains of the *akṣaras* and to both the grammatical and syntactical requirements. It would also give a good reading for what seems to be the required sense. Still, it remains very tentative, and I know of no exact parallels that would support it.[17] It must also be kept in mind that one or more *akṣaras* may have followed those that remain. This simply cannot be determined.

III.

Although the general purport of the inscription is clear, as well as a good deal of its specific phrasing, there are a number of elements which are not. At least two of the proper nouns and two of the kinship terms are unclear because the condition of the stone does not allow for a sure reading. The same applies to the final verb of the final sentence in our inscription. A third kinship term—*nāttikena*—is problematic in a different way: although there is no doubt about the reading, neither its meaning nor its form is well attested.[18] A translation that is sure on all but these points can, however, be made:

> The 26th year of the Great King Huveṣka, the 2nd month, the 26th day. On this day by Nāgarakṣita, the (father) of the trader (Sax-caka), the grandson of the merchant Balakatta, the (son of Buddhapila), an image of the Blessed One, the Buddha Amitābha was set up for the worship of all *buddhas*. Through this root of merit (may) all living things (obtain) the unexcelled knowledge of a *buddha*.

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IV.

Two things are immediately clear about our inscription: it contains, as I have said, both an unambiguous reference to the Buddha Amitābha, and an equally unambiguous and unexpectedly early date. Again, as I have already said, the earliest known reference to Amitābha in Indian epigraphical sources prior to our inscription occurred in a 7th century epigraph from Sāñcī. What is not so clear, of course, is what this means. Both Mukherjee and Sharma, for example, have seen the inscription as evidence for the early presence of "the *Dhyānī* Buddha Tradition." The latter, in fact, explicitly declares that "the most important point is that it [our inscription] establishes the prevalence of the *Dhyānī* Buddha Tradition just in the beginning of the second century A.D."[19] Sharma also makes clear what he means by "the *Dhyānī* Buddha Tradition" by his frequent citations of V.S. Agrawala's "Dhyānī Buddhas and Bodhisattvas"[20]: he means that elaborately schematic construct in which the five "*ādibuddhas*" are provided each with a corresponding *bodhisattva, mānuṣī-buddha, mudrā, vāhana*, etc., and which B. Bhattacharya has argued does not occur anywhere in the literature prior to the 8th century.[21] Unfortunately, while he cites Agrawala's paper, Sharma does not cite de Mallmann's refutation of the argument Agrawala presents there for the early existence of the *dhyānī buddha* complex at Mathurā.[22] This need not be surprising, however, since the points made by de Mallmann against Agrawala are equally applicable to both Sharma's and Mukherjee's remarks. The primary difficulty is that all three ignore certain facts. There is, of course, no doubt that Amitābha has an important role in "the *Dhyānī* Buddha Tradition," but there is also no doubt that he had an important role as an independent figure, and there is no doubt either that his role as an independent figure was primary and continued to be primary. His role in the *dhyānī buddha* complex can only be documented in late liter-

ature of a very specific and restricted kind. His role as an independent figure, however, is easily documented from the very beginnings of Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature, not only in the *Sukhāvatīvyūha* but in other early texts like the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi*[23] and *Samādhirāja*[24], as well as, perhaps, the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇanirdeśa*.[25] These texts attest not only to his early independent character but also indicate that his primary association is not with the *dhyānī buddha* complex—which these texts know nothing about—but with Sukhāvatī, his "buddhafield," as a place of potential rebirth. And these texts are almost certainly nearly contemporaneous with our inscription. Moreover, Amitābha's role as an independent figure completely free of any connection with "the *Dhyānī* Buddha Tradition" continues to be amply attested throughout what might be called "the middle Mahāyāna" period in texts like the *Bhaiṣajyaguru-sūtra*,[26] the *Buddhabalādhānaprātihārya*[27]—both of which are concerned in part with the ritual use and making of images—the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*,[28] the *Mañjuśrībuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha*,[29] etc. What is perhaps even more important is the fact that Amitābha's independent role continues to be primary in texts which were almost certainly written *after* the *dhyānī buddha* complex might have been articulated in at least some form. This is the case, for example, in Mahāyāna *Avadāna* texts like the *Ratnamālāvadāna* and the *Kalpadrumāvadānamāla*.[30] This is also the case for the *Bodhigarbhālaṅkāralakṣa*, the *Raśmivimalaviśuddhaprabhā*, the *Samantamukhapraveśa*, the *Daśa-* and *Saptabuddhakasūtras*, the *Sitātapatra*, etc., many of which are known by archeological and epigraphical evidence to have circulated widely until at least the 10th century.[31] These texts, if they know Amitābha at all, know him as the resident Buddha of Sukhāvatī, not as one of the complex of *dhyānī buddhas*. In fact in this late literature Amitābha, rather than gaining in importance as we might expect if the *dhyānī buddha* conception had had any impact, actually is mentioned less and less. The entire focus has shifted to his buddhafield, to Sukhāvatī itself, as a place of rebirth. Moreover, exactly the same pattern can be traced for the *buddha* Akṣobhya—another of the *buddhas* incorporated into the *dhyānī buddha* complex—from the very early *Akṣobhyavyūha sūtra*,[32] through the whole of Middle Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature,[33] up to the late *Sarvakarmāvaraṇaviśodhanī-dhāraṇī*.[34] From the

beginning, Akṣobhya was primarily, in fact almost exclusively, an independent figure with his own buddhafield. And he remained so even after "the *Dhyānī* Buddha Tradition" had been articulated.

This is not to say that Amitābha does not occasionally appear as one of a "group" of *buddhas* in Middle Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature. He—like Akṣobhya—does, but these "appearances" occur as a part of what appears to be no more than a set narrative device. In this set narrative piece, *buddhas* from various buddhafields—their number varies but they commonly have a directional association—come together in one place (on two occasions it is an individual's house) to impart a specific teaching. Their appearance is commonly connected with a more or less stereotyped set of "transformations" and photic events. This device appears to be designed to signal the degree of the significance of the teaching involved, a way of narratively indicating its significance. In the *Suvarṇabhāsottama-sūtra*, both Amitābha and Akṣobhya appear to a *bodhisattva* as two of a "group" of *buddhas* which the text earlier called "the *buddhas* in the four directions." They transform the *bodhisattva's* house in typical fashion and then in unison impart the "explanation of the measure of the life of the Lord Śākyamuni" (*bhagavataḥ śākyamuner āyuḥpramāṇanirdeśaṃ*).[35] In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, both Amitābha and Akṣobhya again appear as two members of a "group" of twelve named *buddhas* who together with "the innumerable *tathāgatas* of the ten directions" are said to come to Vimalakīrti's house whenever he wishes them to "prêcher l'introduction à la loi (*dharmamukhapraveśa*) intitulée *Tathāgataguhyaka*."[36] In the *Ratnaketuparivarta*, both again appear as two members of a group of six directional *buddhas* who come together in a great assembly (*mahāsannipāta*) at Śākyamuni's request. Their appearance transforms the audience. They then in unison deliver a specific *dhāraṇī*.[37]

Though different in detail all three "events" are clearly built up on the same basic narrative frame and all three serve the same purpose: they all are used to indicate the importance of a particular "teaching" or pronouncement by narratively indicating that it comes from and is taught be "all the *buddhas* from all of the directions." This directional emphasis is a constant. So too is the fact that the place where all the directional *buddhas*

come together—Vimalakīrti's house, the house of the *Suvarṇa's bodhisattva*, the Assembly of Śākyamuni—is explicitly or implicitly assimilated to a buddhafield.[38]

Thurman, referring *only* to the *Vimalakīrti*,[39] and Huntington, referring *only* to the *Suvarṇa*,[40] both failed to recognize the narrative structure and intent of their passages and tried to see in them the descriptions of *maṇḍalas* in a specific tantric sense; the latter, in fact, wants his passage to represent even more specifically "the Maṇḍala of Vairocana," and, therefore, the "*Dhyānī* Buddha Tradition." But neither Thurman nor Huntington seems to have been aware of the *fact* that their individual passages had parallels elsewhere in Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature, and that they were only variants of a standard narrative structure which has a consistent literary function but no demonstrable connection with tantric *maṇḍalas*. Moreover, both ignore the *fact* that the passages themselves both explicitly and implicitly assimilate the places where the directional *buddhas* temporarily reside not to *maṇḍalas*, but to buddhafields. To this can be added the *fact* that in neither case can the list of *buddhas* be reconciled with any specific established *maṇḍala* without convoluted and unsubstantiated "equations."[41] But perhaps the most telling point is the *fact* that in both cases what would be the one essential indication of a tantric connection is simply not there. Neither passage knows a thing about the *buddha* Vairocana, and it is hard to see how one could have a description of "the Maṇḍala of Vairocana" without Vairocana himself.[42] Oddly enough, Vairocana does appear in the *Ratnaketuparivarta* passage as one of the six directional *buddhas*, but even here it is quite clear that he is no more important than any of the other five, and he is clearly not the central figure of the group. He is simply the *buddha* "from below," "from the nadir" (*adhastād*), a Jñānaraśmirāja being the Buddha "from above," "from the zenith" (*agradigbhāgāt*).

It is, of course, significant that a text like the *Ratnaketuparivarta*, a text which is both relatively late and clearly knows the Buddha Vairocana, knows nothing of the *dhyānī buddha* tradition.[43] That even when Amitābha occurs as one of a "group" of directional Buddhas in Mahāyāna *sūtra* literature that "group" has no connection with the *dhyānī buddha* tradition is equally significant. All of this, in fact, would seem to indicate that not only was Amitābha's role as a *dhyānī buddha* secondary

and late, it was *even then* very little known outside of a very restricted, scholastic literature and had little, if any, impact on Mahāyāna literature as a whole *even after* it had been formally articulated. This, in turn, makes it very difficult to see how the Govindnagar inscription can be referring to Amitābha in this role.

Professor Huntington has questioned the association of the Govindnagar inscription with the *dhyānī buddha* form of Amitābha from a different, but equally important, point-of-view. The Govindnagar image was, as far as we can tell, a single image of Amitābha alone. The inscription tells us that much. It was not part of a set. But, as Huntington points out, "the separate dedication of a single image as an object of devotion is completely out of keeping with any known *pañcajina* [i.e., *dhyānī buddha*] practice."[44] Unfortunately, however, Professor Huntington's own interpretation is—though in different ways—equally problematic.

Huntington sees our inscription as "a key document in the history of Sukhāvatī cult Buddhism." He elsewhere in the same piece uses the terms "the Sukhāvatī cults" and "the cult of Amitābha,"[45] but he nowhere gives these terms anything like a precise meaning and it is difficult, as a consequence, to know what he intends. If he means by "Sukhāvatī Cult" or "the Cult of Amitābha" the kind of "cult" we know from Chinese sources—literary, epigraphical, and art historical—then it is still difficult to see how our inscription can be used to establish an Indian form of the same thing.

All our Chinese sources make it abundantly clear that the key and crucial element involved in these cults was the intent to attain rebirth in Sukhāvatī. Religious activity of all sorts was directed to this end. E. Zurcher says: "On September 11, 402 A.D., Hui-yüan assembled the monks and laymen of his community before an image of the Buddha Amitābha in a *vihāra* on the northern side of the mountain [Lu-shan], and together with them made the vow to be reborn in Sukhāvatī. . . .the "vow before Amitābha" has been taken in later times to mark the beginning of the Pure Land sect."[46] At Lung-men it is not simply the presence of numerous images of Amitābha which testify to the presence there of a Sukhāvatī Cult—Amitābha, in fact, is only one of a series of Mahāyāna *buddhas* imaged there. Nor does

the expression there by donors of a wish "que tous les êtres doués de vie. . .s'élèvent ensemble á l'intelligence correcte." This "goal" has nothing specifically to do with a cult of Amitābha there, but is—as its counterpart in Gupta and post-Gupta India—pan-Mahāyāna. It is, rather, the frequently expressed "wish" of donors that their meritorious acts result in rebirth in Sukhāvatī which establishes and specifically characterizes the Sukhāvatī Cult at Lung-men (see inscription Nos. 8, 26, 31, 33, 42, 90, 120, 135, 154, 168, 172, 179, 191, 195, 196, 197, 232, 248, 268, 269, 270, 274, 275, 282, 301, 375, 405, 406, 407, 464).[47] In fact, the desire to achieve rebirth in Sukhāvatī was and always remained the primary definitional component of all these "cults." Curiously enough, our inscription knows nothing of this. It explicitly expresses the donor's intentions, but these intentions have nothing to do with rebirth in Sukhāvatī. Rather, they are in part—as we shall see—the same intentions that were expressed by numerous donors in early India who almost certainly had no connection with a "Sukhāvatī Cult," and in part the same intentions that were later expressed by *all* Mahāyānists, who, again, had no demonstrable connection with a "Sukhāvatī Cult." Professor Huntington asserts in the face of this that our inscription "contains several advanced features of the cult [of Sukhāvatī]." He says "the accumulation of roots of merit, *kuśalamula*, and the hearing of the highest *buddha* knowledge, *anuttarabuddhajñāna*, are features of the later forms of the cults, as evidenced by the Wei, T'ang and Sanskrit versions of the so called 'Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra.' "[48] But even if this last were true, our inscription contains neither. Our inscription says nothing about "the accumulation of roots of merit," but rather—in typical epigraphical fashion—expresses the donor's wish to divest himself of his "roots of merit" by "transferring" them to all living things. And while it is not perfectly clear exactly what it is our inscription hopes will be done in regard to *anuttarabuddhajñāna*, it most certainly is not "be heard." Professor Huntington was here, at least in part, misled by Sharma's conjectural—and, as we have seen, impossible—reading of the final syllables of our inscription. It is absolutely certain that these syllables cannot be read as *śrāvitaṃ*.

If, then, our inscription cannot be taken as evidence for the early existence at Mathurā of "the *Dhyānī* Buddha tradition," and if it cannot be taken as evidence for an early Indian version of "the Sukhāvatī Cult," still—when put in its proper context—it can tell us, perhaps, some important things about the early phases of what we have come to call "the Mahāyāna." As a first step in this direction we might start again with some remarks of Professors Sharma, Mukherjee, and Huntington. All three in one form or another want to claim that our inscription establishes the "prevalence" or "popularity" of Amitābha—however he be conceived—in the Kuṣān period in Northern India and in Mathurā in particular.[49] But when put in the context of what is actually known so far of North Indian epigraphy our inscription, rather than establishing the "popularity" of Amitābha there, establishes something very like the opposite. There is not a single undisputed reference to Amitābha anywhere in our sizable corpus of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from Gandhāra and Northwest India—neither before, during, or after the Kuṣān period. Epigraphically, he did not exist.[50] There is not a single reference to Amitābha in any of the dozens of inscriptions we have from other sites in Northern India—Śrāvasti, Kauśāmbī, Sārnāth, etc.—until the 7th century inscription from Sāñcī. Until then, epigraphically, he did not exist at Sāñcī, and again, he never existed at our other sites. About Amitābha's "popularity" at Mathurā we can be even more precise.

If we use Das' "list" together with Lüders' collection of inscriptions from Mathurā, and supplement both with more recent publications, it would appear that we have at least 159 separate image inscriptions from Mathurā that are dated in, or can be assigned to, the Kuṣān Period. Of these, at least 26 are so fragmentary that their sectarian affiliation cannot be determined.[51] Of the remaining 133, at least 85 are Jain and record the erection of Jain images,[52] 4 are connected with the *Nāga* cults, [53] and 1 records the establishment of an image of Kārttikeya.[54] Only 43 of the 133—or less than one third of the inscriptions—are Buddhist.[55] This means, of course, that, to judge by the Kuṣān in-

scriptions *known so far* from Mathurā, Buddhism itself was there and then a minority movement.

If it is clear—in so far as we can judge from known inscriptions—that Buddhism generally was a distinct minority movement in Kuṣān Mathurā, it is equally sure that any movement associated with Amitābha was even more distinctly a minority movement within that minority movement itself. There is in fact little doubt about the "popular" or "prevalent" Buddhist cult form in Kuṣān Mathurā. Of the certainly Buddhist inscriptions we have, 19 are either fragments or do not indicate the "person" being imaged.[56] Of the remaining 24, at least 11 record the installation of an image of Śākyamuni under various titles—5 *Śākyamuni*,[57] 3 *Buddha*,[58] 2 *Pitāmaha*[59] and 1 *Śākyasiṃha*.[60] 11 others record the setting up of images of what they call "a or the *bodhisattva*."[61] And while there has been a good deal of discussion as to what this can mean—and there will be more [62]—it has been clear for a long time that many of the images which are referred to as "*bodhisattvas*" in their accompanying inscriptions are iconographically *buddhas*. Moreover, a decisive contemporary document has recently come to light which establishes the fact that in Kuṣān Mathurā the terms *buddha* and *bodhisattva* were used interchangeably. The document in question is "a bi-scriptual epigraph of the Kuṣaṇa Period from Mathurā." Here, what in the Brāhmī part of the inscription is called a *bodhisattva*, is, in the Kharoṣṭhī part, said to be a *b(u)dhasa pratime*, "an image of the Buddha."[63]

These inscriptions would seem to indicate that the "popular," "prevalent"—indeed, overwhelmingly predominant—"cult figure" in the Buddhist community of Kuṣān Mathurā was Śākyamuni, Śākyamuni either as a fully enlightened *buddha* or in his *bodhisattva* aspect. Apart from these inscriptions there are only two others. One refers to an image of Kāśyapa Buddha, one of the previous "historical" *buddhas* who is also known from two later Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions from Jaulian.[64] The other is our inscription from Govindnagar which refers to Amitābha. If—as the material *known so far* would seem to indicate—Kāśyapa Buddha, though known, was peripheral to the concerns of the Buddhist community at Mathurā, the same surely applies to Amitābha. Neither appears to have received anything like widespread support or patronage. Both appear to have been of interest only to a very small part of an already restricted community.

But not only was the concern for the Buddha Amitābha apparently very limited during the Kuṣān Period, it also had—to judge by the available evidence—absolutely no impact on the continuing development of Buddhism at Mathurā, or almost anywhere else in Northern India. We have, in fact, noticeably fewer image inscriptions from post-Kuṣān Mathurā, but enough to indicate that any "cult of Amitābha" that had occurred in the Kuṣān Period did not survive into the Gupta Period. This is even more surprising in light of the fact that our Gupta inscriptions from Mathurā amply attest to the prominent presence of the Mahāyāna there at that time. We have, for example, an inscription from Mathurā which is dated to the end of 5th century and which records the installation of an image of Ārya-Avalokiteśvara, and the emergence of Avalokiteśvara everywhere in the 5th/6th century—but not before—is easily documentable. Not only do we have the Mathurā inscription from the end of the 5th century. We also have references to Avalokiteśvara from Sārnāth, Jayarampur and Gunaighar in the 5th/6th century, and from Sāñcī and North Pakistan in the 7th.[65] We also have other evidences, to be discussed in a moment, which clearly establish the emergence of the Mahāyāna at Mathurā, and almost everywhere else in India, during the 5th/6th century, but nowhere do we have the slightest indication that a "Cult of Amitābha" was associated with the emergence and continuing presence of the Mahāyāna there. In fact when we do finally hear of Amitābha again—at Sāñci in the late 7th century—the reference to him is not as an independent "cult figure" but occurs, as we have seen, as a part of an extended hymn of praise of Avalokiteśvara. After this, Amitābha, epigraphically, disappears entirely from India, even though we continue to find dozens of individual Mahāyāna inscriptions up until the 13th century.[66]

If, then, the concern with Amitābha recorded in our inscription represents the beginnings of at least a part of that movement we now call "the Mahāyāna," it is clear that that movement in the beginning was, and remained for several centuries, a very limited minority movement that received almost no popular support, and that when it did finally emerge fully into the public domain as an independent movement the concern with

Amitābha was no longer an active focus. But there is also some evidence to indicate that not only was the initial concern with Amitābha not a major and enduring movement, it also was not an independent movement.

Between the end of the Kuṣān Period and the middle of the Gupta Period, the people involved in the Mathurān Buddhist community and the patterns of patronage changed—as they did in almost all Buddhist communities in India—in some profound ways. The changes at Mathurā were manifested—as they were elsewhere—by the appearance of Avalokiteśvara as a cult figure, by a decided drop in the number of lay donors—particularly women—and a corresponding rise in monk donors, by the sudden appearance of a specific group of monks who called themselves *śākyabhikṣus*, and by the appearance of a very specific and characteristic donative formula. We want here to focus on only the last of these manifestations.

There are 15 inscriptions from Mathurā which date to the Gupta Period in which the donative formula is clear.[67] In 9 of the 15—or 3/5ths—the donative formula is some variant of the following formula:[68]

yad atra puṇyaṃ tad bhavatu sarvvasatvānām anuttarajñānāvāptaye (*MI* No. 186)

"may whatever merit there is in this be for the obtaining of the unexcelled knowledge by all living things"

This formula is—as has been shown elsewhere—both characteristic of, and specific to, the Mahāyāna.[69] It is, therefore, of some interest that our inscription from Govindnagar contains a formula which, although not the same, is almost certainly a forerunner to it or a prototype for it. Professor Sharma, however, ignores the differences between the Govindnagar formula and the "classical" Mahāyāna donative formula and asserts that in our inscription "the creed of *Anuttarajñāna* which became very popular in the Gupta Period is met with for the first time in the Kushāṇa Period."[70] But even if many of the differences are of a minor—if not entirely verbal—nature, still this overlooks at least one very important fact: with one exception which points in the same direction as our Govindnagar inscription, the *anuttarajñāna* formula always occurs by itself, and never in conjunction with other formulae. This is the case in at least 65 separate inscriptions from all parts of India, ranging in date from 4th/5th

century to the 12th/13th century. This pattern, then, is invariable over very large expanses of territory and equally large expanses of time, and reflects the standard usage of the Mahāyāna as a completely independent movement. In the Govindnagar inscription, however, the *anuttaraṃ buddhajñānaṃ* formula is used in conjunction with another, much older formula, which points very much in another direction. *Before* the *anuttaraṃ buddhajñānaṃ* statement our inscription says that the image of Amitābha was set up *[sa](rva)buddhapujāye*, "for the worship of all Buddhas." The Govindnagar inscription therefore is virtually unique in that it uses its version of the *anuttar-jñāna* formula with another formula. Even more important, however, is the fact that that other formula has absolutely nothing to do with the Mahāyāna and is in fact a recurring element in earlier inscriptions which are explicitly associated with named non-Mahāyāna groups. The formula *sarvabuddhapujāye*—sometimes by itself, sometimes as a part of longer formulae—occurs in at least 9 Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, one of which is from Mathurā and all of which probably predate our inscription from Govindnagar.[71] It also occurs in at least 8 other Brāhmī inscriptions from Mathurā—2 from the Śuṅga Period, 3 from the Kṣatrapa Period, and 3 from the Kusān, only 1 of which is later than the Govindnagar inscription[72]—and in one inscription each from Śrāvasti, Kauśāmbī, and Nāsik, all three of which date to the 1st century A.D.[73]

The earliest of the inscriptions from Mathurā dates from the Śuṅga, and records the gift of one Ayala which was made "for the worship of all *buddhas*. . .for the acceptance of the *Mahopadeśaka* teachers" (*MI* No. 89), and *Mahopadeśaka*, according to Lüders, "must be considered to be the name of a [Buddhist] school, although in literature it does not seem to have turned up until now." One of the Kṣatrapa inscriptions records the gift of an image by a monk that was made "for the acceptance of the *Samitiya* teachers" and "for the worship of all the *buddhas*" (*MI* No. 80); another, a gift made again "for the worship of all *buddhas*," but "for acceptance of the *Mahāsaghiyas* (*Mahāsāṅghikas*)" (*MI* No. 86). Of the Kuṣān inscriptions, one dated in 16th year of Kaniṣka records again the gift of an image by a monk that was made "for the worship of all *buddhas*" and, again, "for the acceptance of the *Mahāsaghiya* (*Mahāsāṅghika*) teachers" (*MI*

No. 157). The remaining four inscriptions from Mathurā that contain the formula do not specifically designate a particular group as recipient. At Mathurā, then, whenever a religious act was undertaken "for the worship of all *buddhas*" in association with a specific group, that group was invariably a named non-Mahāyāna school: either the *Mahopadeśakas*, the *Samitiyas*, or —twice—the *Mahāsāṅghikas*. The pattern in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions is similar.

Only 2 of the 9 Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions which contain the formula *sarvabuddhapujāye* also contain the name of a Buddhist school: in the Mathurā Lion Capital, which dates probably to the very beginning of the Common Era,[74] the Kṣatrapa Śudasa gave a piece of land for, in part, "the worship of all *buddhas*" and "for the acceptance of the *Sarvāstivādins*" (*KI* XV); and Bhagamoya, the King of Apaca, "established" the relics of "the Blessed One, Śākyamuni," in 19–20 A.D. for "the worship of all *buddhas*" and "for the acceptance of the *Kāśyapīyas*" (*IIJ* 19, 108). In addition to these two Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions which explicitly name a school, at least three more use a set phrase which my colleague Richard Salomon and I have shown is directly dependent on a passage found in at least two places in Hīnayāna canonical literature, in the *Ekottarāgama* translated into Chinese and in the Gilgit text of the *Vinaya* of the *Mūlasarvāstivādins*.[75] The Taxila Copperplate of Patika, which dates to the end of the 1st century B.C., is typical of these inscriptions. It records the fact that *atra [de]śe patiko apratithavita bhagavata śakamuṇisa śariraṃ [pra]tithaveti [saṃgha]ramaṃ ca sarvabudhana puyae*, "here on a (previously) unestablished spot Patika establishes a relic of the Blessed One Śākyamuni, and a monastic *ārāma*, for the worship of all *buddhas*" (*KI* XIII; *BEFEO* 67, 6; 74, 37).

In the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions which contain the formula *sarvabuddhapujāye* and in which there is any indication of sectarian association it is clear therefore—as it was in the Brāhmī inscriptions from Mathurā—that undertaking religious acts "for the worship of all *buddhas*" was invariably associated with non-Mahāyāna groups: the *Sarvāstivādins*, the *Kāśyapīyas*, etc. [76] What this means for our inscription from Govindnagar is in some ways obvious: the setting up of the earliest known image of a Mahāyāna *buddha* was undertaken for a purpose which was specifically and explicitly associated with established non-Mahāyāna groups. This, in turn,

would strongly suggest that the concern with Amitābha which produced our inscription in the 2nd century A.D. was not only, as we have seen, very limited and uninfluential—a minor preoccupation—it also was not a part of a wholly independent movement. It expressed itself half in old and established idioms, and half in not yet finished new formulae that would come to characterize not a cult of Amitābha, but the Mahāyāna as a whole; it dictated the production of a new image, but for—in part at least—an old and established purpose.

It is interesting to notice that the "exception" referred to above, the one other instance where the *anuttarajñāna* formula occurs in conjunction with another formula, suggests that at Mathurā at least the movement we now call "the Mahāyāna" had not yet achieved complete independence even as late as the second quarter of the 5th century A.D. The inscription in question—also recently discovered at Govindnagar—is dated in the year 115 of—presumably—the Gupta Era, and therefore in A.D. 434–35. After the date the inscription reads in Sharma's clearly faulty transliteration:[77]

L.1. . . . . *asyāṃ. . .divasa puvvayiāṃ* [sic] *bhagavataḥ daśabalabalina śākyamuneḥ*

L.2. *pratimā pratiṣṭhāpitā bhikṣuṇa saṃghavarmaṇā yad atra puṇyaṃ tan mātāpirtrāt* [sic] *purvvagamatkṛtvā sartvasatvāna*

L.3. *sarvvaduḥkhapraharaṇāyā*-[rd.-*prahāṇāyā*-] *nuttara-jñānāvātmaye* [rd.-*āvāptaye*]. . .(*BAM* 223n. 148)

". . .on this day an image of the Blessed One, the One Powerful from the Ten Powers, Śākyamuni, was set up by the monk Saṃghavarman. What here is the [resulting] merit [may that be]—having put his parents foremost—for the abandoning of all suffering of all living things, for the obtaining of the unexcelled knowledge."

This inscription is atypical in several ways. It uses the formula *asyāṃ. . .divasa puvvayiāṃ* [sic]. . .*pratimā pratiṣṭhāpitā* which is found everywhere in earlier Kuṣān inscriptions, but, apart from a few transitional Gupta inscriptions,[78] nowhere in "classical" Mahāyāna epigraphs. The latter inscriptions invariably have the phrase *deyadharmmo=yam* at the head of their formula, but there is no trace of it here. The epithet *daśabalabalin* used here of Śākyamuni is never found in Mahāyāna image inscriptions. When the donor is a monk in Mahāyāna inscriptions he

is never referred to as a *bhikṣu*, as he is here, but almost always as a *śākyabhikṣu*; very rarely some other title is used.[79] This inscription, then, is quite clearly not characteristically Mahāyāna, and may in fact represent—like our Amitābha inscription *but at a much later date*—a stage or sector of that movement we call "the Mahāyāna" that had not yet achieved complete independence. Its mechanical fusion of an older formula—*sarvadukhaprahāṇāya* (cf. *MI* Nos. 29, 81)—with what became the "classical" Mahāyāna formula might at least suggest this.

VII.

That a new "movement" should look like this in the beginning is not very surprising. What is a little more surprising is the fact that—epigraphically—the "beginning" of the Mahāyāna in India is not documentable until the 2nd century A.D., and that even as "late" as that it was still an extremely limited minority movement that left almost no mark on Buddhist epigraphy or art and was still clearly embedded in the old established purposes of earlier Buddhist groups. What is even more surprising still is the additional fact that even after its initial appearance in the public domain in the 2nd century it appears to have remained an extremely limited minority movement—if it remained at all—that attracted absolutely no *documented* public or popular support for at least two more centuries. It is again a demonstrable fact that anything even approaching popular support for the Mahāyāna cannot be documented until the 4th/5th century A.D., and even then the support is overwhelmingly by monastic, not lay, donors. In fact, prior to our inscription from Govindnagar there was simply no epigraphic evidence for the "early" Mahāyāna at all. This, in the end, is the real significance of the Govindnagar inscription when seen in its proper context: it establishes the presence of the very beginnings of "the Mahāyāna" as a public movement in the 2nd century A.D., and indicates, by its total isolation and lack of influence, the tenuous, hesitant, and faltering character of those "beginnings."

All of this of course accords badly with the accepted and long current view—based almost exclusively on literary sources—that the movement we call "the Mahāyāna" appeared

on the scene somehow fully formed and virtually finished at the beginning of the Common Era. Common sense itself might have suspected such a view, but Indian epigraphy makes it very clear that "the Mahāyāna" as a public movement began—to invert an old line of T.S. Eliot's—"not with a bang, but a whimper." It suggests that, although there was—as we know from Chinese translations—a large and early Mahāyāna literature, there was no early organized, independent, publically supported movement that it could have belonged to. It suggests, in fact, that if we are to make any progress in our understanding we may have to finally and fully realize that the history of Mahāyāna *literature* and the history of the religious movement that bears the same name are not necessarily the same thing. This, I would think, should raise some interesting questions.[80]

ABBREVIATIONS

BAM = R.C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathurā* (Delhi: 1984)
BEFEO = *Bulletin de l'école française d'extrême-orient*
BHSG = F. Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar* (New Haven: 1953)
BI = H. Lüders, *Bharhut Inscriptions* (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. II, Part II), rev. E. Waldschmidt & M.A. Mehendale (Ootacamund: 1963)
Das = K. Das (Bajpayee), *Early Inscriptions of Mathurā—A Study* (Calcutta: 1980), Appendix B, 161–239
EHS = Th. Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit. Its Rise, Spread, Characteristics and Relationship to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (Leiden: 1978)
EI = *Epigraphia Indica*
GI = J.F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors* (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. III) (Calcutta: 1888)
IIJ = *Indo-Iranian Journal*
JAIH = *Journal of Ancient Indian History*
JIABS = *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*
JIP = *Journal of Indian Philosophy*
JUPHS = *Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society*
KI = S. Konow, *Kharoshṭhī Inscriptions With the Exception of Those of Aśoka* (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. II, Part I) (Calcutta: 1929)
LL = H. Lüders, *A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from the Earliest Times to About A.D. 400, with the Exception of Those of Asoka* (Appendix to *Epigraphica Indica*, Vol X) (Calcutta: 1912)
M = B.N. Mukherjee's edition of the Amitābha Inscription in *JAIH* 11 (1977–78) 82–4.
MI = H. Lüders, *Mathurā Inscriptions*, ed. K.L. Janert (Göttingen: 1961)

Pek = *The Tibetan Tripiṭaka (Peking Edition)*, ed. D.T. Suzuki (Tokyo-Kyoto: 1955–61)
S = R.C. Sharma's edition of the Amitābha Inscription in *BAM* 232 n. 169
WZKS = *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*

NOTES

1. For one version of the rather sad story of the Govindnagar site see *BAM* 92–3.

2. The date of Kaniṣka is, of course, not yet settled, and the assumption that the era named after him began in 78 A.D. little more than a good working hypothesis; cf. most recently G. Fussman, "Un buddha inscrit des débuts de notre ère" *BEFEO* 54 (1985) 44.

3. D.C. Bhattacharya, "A Newly Discovered Copperplate from Tippera," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 6 (1930) 53 (lines 3, 5); S. Rajaguru, "Jayarampur Copper-Plate Inscription of the Time of Gopachandra," *The Orissa Historical Research Journal*, 11:4 (1963) 227 (lines 29–30); G. Yazdani, *Ajanta*, Part IV: Text (London: 1955) 112 and n.4.

4. J. Marshall, A. Foucher, and N.G. Majumdar, *The Monuments of Sāñchī* (Delhi: 1940), Vol. I, no. 842.

5. G. Schopen, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," *IIJ* 21 (1979) 1–19; I am now working on a more complete and revised treatment of this material.

6. P.R. Srinivasan, "Two Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathura," *EI* 39 (1971) 10–12 (lines 3 & 4).

7. cf. M. Shizutani, *Indo bukkyō himei mokuroku* (Kyoto: 1979) no. 1823; B.N. Mukherjee, "A Mathura Inscription of the Year 26 and of the Period of Huvishka," *JAIH* 11 (1977–78) 82–4; R.C. Sharma, "New Buddhist Sculptures from Mathura," *Lalit Kalā* 19 (1979) 25–6; *BAM* 232 n. 169.

8. J.C. Huntington, "A Gandhāran Image of Amitāyus' Sukhāvatī," *Annali dell' Instituto Orientale di Napoli* 40 (1980) 651, 672; Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," to be published in a volume of papers read at an International Seminar on Mathurā at Mathurā in January 1980, pp. 4–5a of type-script; S.L. Huntington with contributions by J.C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India. Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (Tokyo: 1985) 114; 630 n. 6; J. Guy, "A Kushan Bodhisattva and Early Indian Sculpture," *Art Bulletin of Victoria* (Australia) no. 24 (1983) 43 and n. 20; S.J. Czuma, *Kushan Sculptures: Images from Early India* (Cleveland: 1985) 75 n.2.

9. G. Schopen, "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrines of the Transference of Merit," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1985) 40–1.

10. Sharma published a photograph of our inscription in both *Lalit Kalā* 19 (1979) pl. XLII, fig. 18 and in *BAM* fig. 151. Both in his text (e.g. p. 231) and in the "Description of Illustrations" (p. 280–1), however, Sharma confuses the Amitābha pedestal, which is in actuality his fig. 151, with his fig. 154, which is the photograph of a completely unrelated inscription transliterated in his n. 153, p. 226. Mukherjee too, at least in part, worked from a photograph (p. 82).

11. My references throughout this section are to Sharma's edition in *BAM* and do not refer to his earlier publications at all.

12. For references, see below n. 71.

13. For references, see below n. 73.

14. V.A. Smith & W. Hoey, "Ancient Buddhist Statuettes and a Candella Copper-plate from the Bāndā District," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 64 (1895) 155–62; D.C. Sircar, "King Harirāja of Bundelkhand," *The Journal of Oriental Research, Madras* 18 (1949) 185–87; Sircar, "Copper Coin of Harigupta," *EI* 33 (1960) 95–98.

15. D.C. Sircar in "Monthly Seminars at the Centre, Thursday, the 18th September, 1969," *JAIH* 3 (1969–70) 280–81; S. Czuma, "A Gupta Style Bronze Buddha," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Feb. 1970) 54–67.

16. J. Burgess, *Report on the Elura Cave Temples and the Brahmanical and Jaina Caves in Western India* (London: 1883) 77, no. 9.

17. Generally if a donative formula contains a finite verb it is an imperative form of √*bhū* or √*as* (cf. *EHS* 129–31; *KI*, cxv; etc.). The occurrence of an imperative or optative form from other roots is very rare in inscriptions, a little more common in literary donative formulae: e.g. . . . *pūjāṃ kṛtvā praṇidhānaṃ ca kṛtam/ anenāhaṃ kuśalamūlenādhye mahādhane mahābhoge kule jāyeyam* (S. Bagchi, *Mūlasarvāstivādavinayavastu*, Vol. II. (Dharbhanga: 1970) 170. 21).

18. On *nāttika*, see H. Lüders, "On Some Brahmi Inscriptions in the Lucknow Provincial Museum," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1912) 160; D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* (Delhi: 1966) 212, s.v. *naptṛka*; EHS 21 and n. 131, 63.

19. *BAM* 231.

20. V.S. Agrawala, "Dhyani Buddhas and Bodhisattvas," *JUPHS* 11.2 (1938) 1–13 (reprinted in V.S. Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art* (Varanasi: 1965) 137–146.

21. B. Bhattacharya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (Oxford: 1924) xxiv; 1ff.

22. M.-T de Mallmann, "Head-dresses with Figurines in Buddhist Art," *Indian Art and Letters*, ns. 21.2 (1947) 80–89.

23. P.M. Harrison, *The Tibetan Text of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra* (Tokyo: 1978) 3a-c, 3c-f (cf. P.M. Harrison, "Buddhānusmṛti in the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra," *JIP* 6 (1978) 42ff.)

24. N. Dutt *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. II (Srinagar: 1941) 32.3; 165.9; Vol. II. Part II. (Calcutta: 1953) 271.11; 350.15; 450.3; etc. (On Amitābha in the Samādhirāja and the following texts see G. Schopen, "Sukhāvatī as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature," *IIJ* 19 (1977) 177–210).

25. N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. I (Srinagar: 1939) 106.12; 107.3; 126.6. What is not sure in regard to the *Ajātasenavyākaraṇa* is not whether it refers to Amitābha, but to what period it dates. Dutt (p. 73) says "it represents

the semi-Mahāyānic form of Buddhism," and there are a number of passages which would support this. But whether that means it is early has yet to be determined.

26. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. I. 14.5 f.

27. *'phags pa sans rgyas kyi stobs bskyed pa'i cho 'phrul rnam par 'phrul ba bstan pa źes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 34, 192-2-8, 192-5-6 (cf. G. Schopen, "The Five Leaves of the Buddhabalādhānaprātihāryavikurvāṇanirdeśa-sūtra Found at Gilgit," *JIP* 5 (1978) 319–36, esp. 323).

28. I. Yamada, *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, Vol. II. (London: 1968) 106.1–117.7.

29. *'phags pa 'jam dpal gyi sans rgyas kyi źiṅ gi yon tan bkod pa źes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 23, 126-5-1; 131-5-8f; 133-3-2f; 134-3-1; 135-5-7; etc.

30. K. Takahata, *Ratnamālāvadāna* (Tokyo: 1954) 62.20; 63.9; 279.21; and index s.v. *sukhāvatī* (on both the *Ratnamālā* and the *Kalpadruma* see J.S. Speyer, *Avadānaçataka* (St. Petersburg: 1906–09; reprinted The Hague: 1958) xxi ff. For Amitābha in the *Kalpadruma* see esp. xxvii-xxviii; xci. There are, according to Speyer (p. xcix), several references to "the five *dhyānī-buddhas*" in the *Vicitrakarṇikāvadāna* which is one of the so-called *Vratāvadānas*, all of which "are obviously quite late Mahāyāna works" (M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II. (Calcutta: 1927) 292 and n. 2).

31. On these texts and the references found in them to Amitābha/Sukhāvatī see G. Schopen, "The Text on the 'Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya': a Minor Contribution to the Study of Mahāyāna Literature in Ceylon," *JIABS* 5 (1982) 99–108; Schopen, "The Generalization of an Old Yogic Attainment in Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtra Literature: Some Notes on *Jātismara*," *JIABS* 6 (1983) 146 n. 48; Schopen, "The Bodhigarbhālaṅkāralakṣa and Vimaloṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇīs in Indian Inscriptions: Two Sources for the Practice of Buddhism in Medieval India," *WZKS* 29 (1985) 119–49.

32. *'phags pa de bźin gśegs pa mi 'khrugs pa'i bkod pa źes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*, Pek. Vol. 22, 128-1-1 to 160-2-5; cf. now J. Dantinne, *La splendeur de l'inébranlable (Akṣobhyavyūha)*, t.I. (Louvain-La-Neuve: 1983). Also see, for early references, R. Mitra, *Aṣṭasāhaśrika* (Calcutta: 1888) 365.7–369; 449.12–453.5; 457–58; etc.; P.L. Vaidya, *Samādhirājasūtra* (Darbhanga: 1961) XI. 60; XIV. 68; XXXIV. 48; XXXVI. 1; N. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. I 107.4 (the *Ajitasenavyākaraṇa*).

33. For references to Akṣobhya in Middle Mahāyāna Sūtra literature see I. Yamada, *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, Vol. I. (London: 1968) 234 ff; to which I would add: Ét. Lamotte, *L'enseignement de Vimalakīrti* (*Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*) (Louvain: 1962) 64, 85, 279, 360–67 and ns; N. Dutt, *Pañcaviṃśatisāhaśrika Prajñāpāramitā* (London: 1934) 91f; E. Conze, *Gilgit Manuscript of the Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā, Chapters 55 to 70* (Roma: 1962) 63, 21f; 65.4f; 66.9; 80.8f; *Mañjuśribuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha*, Pek. Vol. 34, 122-2-4 = C. Bendall, *Śikṣasamuccaya* (St. Petersbourg: 1897–1902; repr. Tokyo: 1977) 14.15; *Buddhabalādhānaprātihārya*, Pek. Vol. 34, 192-2-8; Y. Kurumiya, *Ratnaketuparivarta* (Kyoto: 1978) 121.1f; 176.20; *Kusumasaṃcaya-sūtra*, Pek. Vol. 37, 67-5-8ff; *Ratnajāliparipṛcha*, Pek. Vol. 33, 245-3-4, 3-5; Yamada, *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka*, 161.6-178.4.

34. *'phags pa yas kyi sgrib pa thams cad rnam par sbyoṅ ba źes bya ba'i gzuṅs*, Pek. Vol. 8, 162-1-3ff; cf. also *Raśmivimalaviśuddhaprabha*, Pek. Vol. 7, 189-2-3; *Tathāgatānām-buddhakṣetra-guṇokta-dharmaparyāya*, Pek. Vol. 28, 262-4-1; etc. (note that the final line of the *Sarvakarmāvaraṇaviśodhanī* in the Pek. edition reads *de bźin gśegs pa de ñid byon nas 'di skad du rigs kyi bu tshur ña'i gan du śog ces kyaṅ gsuṅ bar 'gyur ro*, the name of the *tathāgata—mi 'khrugs pa*—having accidentally dropped out; cf. Nying Ma reprint of the Derge, Vol. 36, 916-1, etc.)

35. J. Nobel, *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra. Das Goldglanz-Sūtra, ein Sanskrittext des Mahāyāna-Buddhismus* (Leipzig: 1937) 6.1ff; R.E. Emmerick, *The Sūtra of the Golden Light* (London: 1970) 3–8. Note that the "explanation of the measure of life of the Lord Śākyamuni" given by the directional *buddhas* responds to a major buddhalogical problem that preoccupied the authors of several Middle Mahāyāna texts: "How could Śākyamuni have died if in fact he really was what he was said to be?" The same problem—in different terms—had already preoccupied the authors/compilers of the *Mahāparinibbana-sutta*. It was also a major preoccupation of the compilers of *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*. Chapter XV of the *Saddharma*, which some have taken as the central chapter (Mus says "le sūtra soit essentiellement contenu dans le seul chapitre XV," P. Mus "Le buddha paré," *BEFEO* 28 (1928) 178ff.) has exactly the same title as the chapter of the *Suvarṇa* which contains our passage—*Tathāgatāyuṣpramāṇaparivarta*—and addresses exactly the same problem. The same problem again is a central preoccupation of the *Buddhabalādhānaprātihārya*; cf. Schopen, *JIP* 5 (1978) 319–36.

36. Lamotte, *L'enseignement de vimalakīrti*, 279–80; R.A.F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (University Park: 1976) 61. Note that according to Lamotte "l'introduction à la loi (dharmamukhapraveśa) intitulée Tathāgataguhyaka" taught by the directional Buddhas is the *Tathāgatācintyaguhyanirdeśa* (T. 310, 312) to which the *Vimalakīrti* makes a second allusion in Ch. IV. Sect. 1. Thurman calls this into question in part at least for the quite amazing reason that "it does not seem quite certain that so many *tathāgatas* would be required to expound the same text" (p. 128 n. 23).

37. Kurumiya, *Ratnaketuparivarta* 121ff. Note that the *dhāraṇī* given by the directional *buddhas* in Ch. VI. is the same text "entrusted" to Brahmā, Śakra, etc., by Śākyamuni in Ch. XI. and is in this sense at least implicitly equated with the text as a whole.

38. Lamotte, *L'enseignement* 280 (Ch. VI. Sect. 14.8); Thurman, *The Holy Teaching*, 61; although the term *buddhakṣetra* does not actually occur in the extant Sanskrit text of the *Suvarṇa* it does in the "early" Chinese version (T. 663) cited by Huntington (see next n. 42); Kurumiya, *Ratneketu* 123.4 & n. 3.

39. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching*, 128 n. 23.

40. J.C. Huntington, "Note on a Chinese Text Demonstrating the Earliness of Tantra," *JIABS* 10(1987) 80ff.

41. Huntington himself (p. 93), after a table giving the various names, notes that "at first reading, these names may not seem to be very closely related."

42. Thurman refers to the "cosmic maṇḍala" in the *Guhyasamājatantra*, but there too Vairocana has a crucial role. See Y. Matsunaga, *The Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Osaka: 1978) 4ff.

43. Dutt, *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. IV. (Calcutta: 1959)i, dates the *Ratnaketu*, on the basis of the Chinese translation of it attributed to Dharmarakṣa, to "about the fourth century A.D." at the latest. Kurumiya, however, points out that the attribution to Dharmarakṣa has been put in doubt; see *Ratnaketu*, xi-xiv.

44. Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," p. 5 (type-script).

45. Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," pp. 5–5a.

46. E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, Vol. I. (Leiden: 1972) 219.

47. For an overview of these inscriptions see K.K.S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China. A Historical Survey* (Princeton: 1964) 170–80; a much older but still invaluable treatment of the Lung-men material is E. Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la chine septentrionale*, t. I., deuxième partie (Paris: 1915) 320–561, in which almost 500 separate inscriptions are translated. The quotation given here is from, and the numbers refer to, Chavannes.

48. Huntington, "Mathurā Evidence for the Early Teachings of Mahāyāna," p. 5a.

49. Sharma, *BAM* 231–32; Mukherjee, 83; etc.

50. The only possible exception to this is the inscription published in J. Brough, "Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara in an Inscribed Gandhāran Sculpture," *Indologica Taurinensia* 10 (1982) 65–70. But this inscription is very problematic: "(Presumably) about one-third of the inscription, or possibly slightly more" has been lost, according to Brough. He goes on to say that "the inscription is of a somewhat unusual form"—in fact, the syntax there is extremely odd. R. Salomon, who is working on the innscription now, is of the opinion that there is no reference in it to Amitābha at all, and, while we must await his published conclusions, this seems very likely. It is also worth noting that J. Huntington has argued that the Mohammed Nari stele is "a representation of the Sukhāvatī paradise of Amitāyus" (J.C. Huntington, "A Gandhāran Image of Amitāyus' Sukhāvatī," *Annali dell' Institutio Orientale di Napoli* 40 (1980) 651–72; etc.), but this identification has already been called into question from an art-historical point-of-view (see R.L. Brown, "The Śrāvastī Miracles in the Art of India and Dvāravatī," *Archives of Asian Art* 37 (1984) 81ff.) and it is open to other types of criticism as well. Huntington, for example, on the basis of his figure 4, assumes that the stele represents an instance where the historical Buddha shows a buddhafield to the monk Ānanda. He is aware of the possibility "that Abhirati either predated Sukhāvatī or, at the latest, developed simultaneously with it," and that as a consequence "it will be necessary to be *certain* that the Mohammed Nari stele does not represent Abhirati" (p. 657, my emphasis). He thinks that this is "rather easily determined" and cites as his primary evidence the fact that in the one instance that he is aware of where someone "grants" a vision of Abhirati to someone else, it is not Śākyamuni who shows the buddhafield to Ānanda, but "Vimalakīrti himself who displays Abhirati to the assembly." On this "evidence" he rules Abhirati out. Unfortunately, the *Vimalakīrti* passage is not the only one in

Mahāyāna literature where someone "shows" Abhirati to someone else. In the *Akṣobhyavyūha* itself, Subhūti "shows" it to Ānanda (Pek. Vol. 22. 148-4-4ff.), but this raises no difficulties for Huntington. However, in what appears to be a very old passage found in all the larger "redactions" of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*—the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikā*, the *Pañcaviṃśati*, etc.—it is Śākyamuni who shows Abhirati to Ānanda, which fits exactly with what Huntington sees on the Mohammed Nari Stele (the earliest extant version of the passage, and the best preserved, is in E. Conze, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā.Chapters 55–70* (Roma: 1962) 80–81. Conze, in specific regard to the *Aṣṭa*, has held that the Akṣobhya passages were later additions, but Lancaster has shown that they were already in the earliest Han translation; see L. Lancaster, *An Analysis of the Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*, PhD. Thesis, The University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1968, p. 316). In addition to these considerations, it might also be noted that Huntington sees Vajrapāṇi in the stele and, although Vajrapāṇi has no connection with Amitābha, he has a formally expressed connection with Akṣobhya (see Pek. Vol. 22, 134-4-8; Dantinne, *La splendeur de l'inébranlable*, 106–07). Moreover the presence of a woman in the stele and therefore in Sukhāvatī creates problems for Huntington, but women have a conspicuous place in Abhirati (Dantinne, *La splendeur*, 194–96 & n. W). Just this much is enough to show that Huntington's argument does not meet his own conditions, i.e., that "it will be necessary to be certain that the Mohammed Nari stele does not represent Abhirati." There is, in fact, probably more "evidence" to suggest that it represents Abhirati than there is to suggest that it represents Sukhāvatī. But in truth it probably represents neither.

51. Das' nos.—Kuṣān Dated: 73.—Kuṣān Undated: 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 27, 82, 86, 88, 96, 100, 103, 104, 109, 110, 119, 124, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 135, 136.

52. Das' nos.—Kuṣān Dated: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 33, 37, 38, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 75, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 97, 98, 99.—Kuṣān Undated: 3, 21, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 94, 98, 113, 122.

53. Das' nos. Kuṣān Dated: 11, 49, 64.—Kuṣān Undated: 52.

54. Das' no.—Kuṣān Dated: 15.

55. Das' nos.—Kuṣān Dated: 1 (*MI* No. 172,F), 3 (Sircar *EI* 34,F), 9 (*MI* No. 154,F), 10 (*MI* No. 128), 17 (*MI* No. 80, Luders classifies as Ksatrapa), 19 (*MI* No. 157), 20 (*MI* No. 150), 26 (*MI* No. 73), 30 (*MI* No. 74), 31 (*MI* No. 136), 35 (*MI* No. 28,F), 40 (*MI* No. 103,F), 42 (*MI* No. 24), 46 (Agrawala *JUPHS* No. 21,F), 48 (*MI* No. 126), 54 (*MI* No. 180), 62 (*MI* No. 134), 63 (*MI* No. 29), 71 (Sircar *EI* No. 30,F), 96 (Srivastava *EI* No. 37). Kuṣān Undated: 1 (*MI* No. 135), 9 (*MI* No. 76,F), 19 (*MI* No. 41,F), 51 (*MI* No. 26,F), 53 (*MI* No. 96,F), 54 (*MI* No. 90), 83 (*MI* No. 3), 84 (*MI* No. 2), 85 (*MI* No. 4), 99 (*MI* No. 183), 108 (Srivasta *JUPHS* ns. 7—I have not been able to see this inscription so I leave it out of account), 117 (*MI* No. 153,F), 120 (Agrawala *JUPHS* 10), 121 (Agrawala *JUPHS* 21,F), 125 (*MI* No. 121,F), 134 (*MI* No. 87,F). To which should be added: *MI* No. 2, *MI* No. 81, *BAM* 181 n. 41, *BAM*

181 n. 42(F), *BAM* 191 N. 63, *BAM* 232 n. 169, *JAIH* 13, 287ff.

56. All those inscriptions which are marked with an F in the preceding note, plus nos. 17 (which Lüders classifies as Kṣatrapa) and 62 (which does not indicate who the image is of) of Das' Kuṣān Dated.

57. *MI* Nos. 4, 29, 180, 183, and *BAM* 191, n.63.

58. *MI* Nos. 74, 135, Das, Kuṣān Undated no.108.

59. *MI* No. 81, Kuṣāṅ Dated no.96.

60. *MI* No. 3.

61. *MI* Nos. 2, 24, 73, 126, 128, 134, 136, 150, 157; *BAM* 181 n.41; *JAIH* 13.

62. see J.Ph. Vogel, "Epigraphical Discoveries at Sarnath," *EI* 8 (1905–06) 173–79; L. Bachhofer, *Die frühindische Plastik* (München: 1929) 103; J.E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The "Scythian" Period. An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D.* (Leiden: 1949) 177–79; B. Rowland, "Bodhisattvas or Deified Kings: A Note on Gandhāra Sculpture," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 15 (1961) 6–12; B. Rowland, "Rome and the Kushans: Images of Princes and Gods," Foreward to J.M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Berkeley: 1967) vii-xvi (for Rosenfield's own view see pp. 238–44); N. Ray, *Idea and Image in Indian Art* (New Delhi: 1972) 9–52; A.L. Basham, "The Evolution of the Concept of the Bodhisattva," *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism*, ed. L.S. Kawamura (Waterloo: 1981) 29–31; etc. (This is meant as a representative, not an exhaustive bibliography).

63. B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "On a Bi-scriptual Epigraph of the Kuṣaṇa Period from Mathurā," *JAIH* 13 (1980–2) 277–84; B.N. Mukherjee, "A Note on a Bi-scriptural Epigraph of the Kushāṇa Period from Mathurā," *JAIH* 13 (1980–2) 285–86.

64. V.S. Agrawala, "A New Inscribed Image of Kāśyapa Buddha from Mathurā," *JUPHS* 10.2 (1937) 35–38; Konow, *KI*, XXXVI.9, 11 (cf. J.PH. Vogel, "The Past Buddhas and Kāśyapa in Indian Art and Epigraphy," *Asiatica. Festschrift F. Weller* (Leipzig: 1954) 808–16.

65. See Srinivasan cited in n.6, Bhattacharyya and Rajaguru cited in n.3, Marshall et al. cited in n.4, and add D.R. Sahni, *Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sārnāth* (Calcutta: 1914) D(f)2 (p. 239); O. von Hinüber, "Zu einigen Felsinschriften in Brāhmī aus Nordpakistan," *Ethnologie und Geschichte: Festschrift für K. Jettmar*, Hrsg. P. Snoy (Wiesbaden: 1983) 272–79 (the date of these inscriptions is problematic; cf. Jettmar, *Zentralasiatische Studien* 16 (1982) 296 and *Journal of Central Asia* IV.2 (1981) n.15); S. Konow, "Arigom Sarada Inscription. Laukika Samvat 73," *EI* 9 (1907/08) 300–02; N.G. Majumdar, "Nalanda Inscription of Vipulasrimitra," *EI* 21 (1931–32) 97–101; etc.

66. See Schopen, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," 14 and add: V.V. Vidyavinoda, "Two Inscriptions from Bodh-gaya," *EI* 12 (1913–14) 27–30; D.C. Sircar, "Indological Notes. No. 24—Inscriptions on the Bronze Images from Jhewari in the Indian Museum," *JAIH* 10 (1976–77) 111–12; D. Mitra, *Bronzes from Bangladesh: A Study of Buddhist Images from District Chittagong* (Delhi: 1982) 17–21, 39, 42, 43, 44, etc.; R.D. Banerji, "Four Sculptures from Chandimau," *Archaelogical Survey of India. Annual Report* 1911–12 (Calcutta: 1915)

161; D.R. Sahni, "Saheth-Maheth Plate of Govindchandra; [Vikrama] Samvat 1186," *EI* 11 (1911/12) 20–26; etc. In regard to Sukhāvatī, I know of only one possible reference (see N.G. Majumdar, "Nalanda Inscription of Vipulasrimitra," *EI* 21 (1931/32) 99, vs.12) but that it is actually Sukhāvatī that is being referred to here is not clear. This inscription dates to the 12th century.

67. *MI* Nos. 8*, 67*, 78, 179*, 184, 185*, 186*; Srivastava *EI* 37*; Fleet *GI* no.63*; Sircar *EI* 34; Srinivasan *EI* 39*; *BAM* 223 n.148*, 226, n.153, 226 n.154, 228 n.159.

68. Those inscriptions marked with an asterisk in n.67.

69. Schopen, "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions," 4ff.; Schopen, *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1985) 37ff., especially ns.87 and 88 which correct some of the statements made in the first paper cited here; cf. M. Shizutani, "Mahāyāna Inscriptions in the Gupta Period," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 10.1 (1962) 358–55 (Shizutani here says that "the title śākyabhikṣu. . .does not appear in any Buddhist inscriptions of the pre-Gupta period except a Kushāna inscription from Mathurā (Lüders no. 134)," but Lüders (*MI* p. 76) has shown that "we may rest assured that the reading śākyabhikṣusya [in the inscription referred to in Shizutani] is due merely to arbitrary alteration," and that "the writing has evidently been altered in the facsimile").

70. Sharma, *Lalit Kalā* 19 (1979) 26.

71. Konow, *KI* XIII (pp. 28–29), XV (p. 48), XVII (p. 52), XXVII (p. 77), XXXII (p. 87); S. Konow, "Charsadda Kharoṣṭhī Inscription of the Year 303," *Acta Orientalia* 20 (1947) 109; R. Salomon, "The Bhagamoya Relic Bowl Inscription," *IIJ* 27 (1984) 108; G. Fussman, "Nouvelles inscriptions śaka: ère d'Eucratide, ère d'Azes, ère Vikrama, ère de Kaniṣka," *BEFEO* 67 (1980) 6; G. Fussman, "Nouvelles inscriptions śaka (III)," *BEFEO* 74 (1985) 37.

72. Śuṅga: *MI* Nos. 89, 187; Kṣatrapa: *MI* Nos. 80, 86, 123; Kuṣān: *MI* Nos. 29, 157, *BAM* 181 n.41. D.C. Sircar ("Mathura Image Inscription of Vasudeva," *EI* 30 (1953–54) 181–84), in editing an inscription dated in the 64th or 67th year of Kaniṣka, has suggested (182, 184 n.4) that this inscription might originally have read, in part, *pūjārtha sarvabuddhāna*, but this seems unlikely.

73. *BAM* 180 n.38; A. Ghosh, "Buddhist Inscription from Kausambi," *EI* 34 (1961–62) 14–16; E. Senart, "The Inscriptions in the Caves at Nasik," *EI* 8 (1905) 90, no.18.

74. cf. R. Salomon, "The Kṣatrapas and Mahākṣatrapas of India," *WZKS* 17 (1973) 11; A.K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford: 1957) 142ff.

75. R. Salomon & G. Schopen, "The Indravarman (Avaca) Casket Inscription Reconsidered: Further Evidence for Canonical Passages in Buddhist Inscriptions," *JIABS* 7 (1984) 107–23.

76. We do not actually know who was included in the category *sarvabuddha*, although all our actual evidence indicates that probably from the beginning—certainly before Aśoka—the Indian Buddhist community knew and actively worshipped a plurality of *buddhas* which included at least the six "former" *buddhas*. We also know that Kāśyapa, at least, was known in Kuṣān Mathurā. Vogel seems to have connected the term *sarvabuddha* exclusively with this group (*Asiatica* (Leipzig: 1954) 816; he gives here a survey of the

evidence for the early plurality of the *buddhas*). The Jains also knew a series of former *jinas* and it is therefore interesting to note that a parallel to the formula *sarvabuddhapujāye, arahatapujāye* ("for the worship of the arhats"), occurs frequently in Jain inscriptions from Mathurā as the sole stated purpose for which a religious donation was made. (G. Bühler, "Further Jaina Inscriptions from Mathurā," *EI* 2 (1894) nos. II, V, IX, XXIII, XXX, XXXII).

77. Sharma's text is full of mistakes. (The same is true of Sharma's transcription of the same inscription published in J.G. Williams, *The Art of Gupta India Empire and Province* (Princeton: 1982) 6B n.31) I have ignored several, marked two of the most bizarre with sic, and corrected two. The whole inscription needs to be re-edited, but the published photographs (*BAM* pls. 142 & 143) are so bad that it cannot be done from them.

78. V.N. Srivastava, "Two Image Inscriptions from Mathura," *EI* 37 (1967) 153–154 (dated in the 125th year of the Gupta Era); Srinivasan, *EI* (1971) 9–12 (either 148 or 178 of the Gupta Era).

79. Schopen *IIJ* 21 (1978) 8–9 and n.18; Mitra, *Bronzes from Bangladesh*, 39, 43.

80. I would like to thank Richard Salomon for having read a draft of the present paper and for having let me profit from his always valuable observations.

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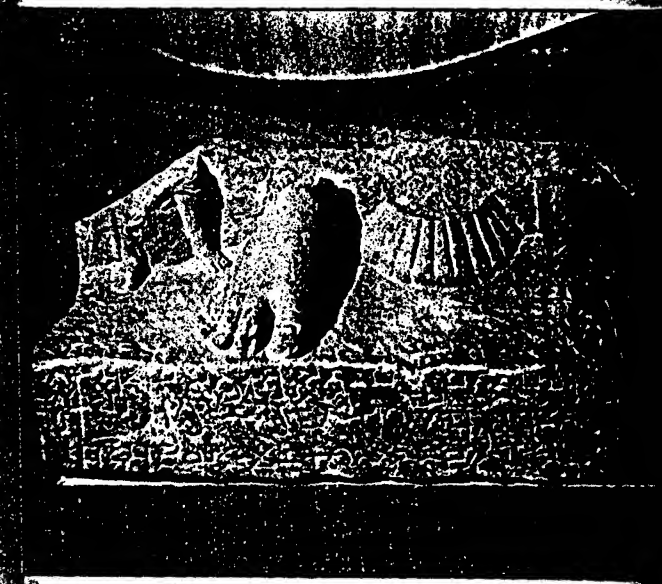

The Kuṣān Amitābha Inscription

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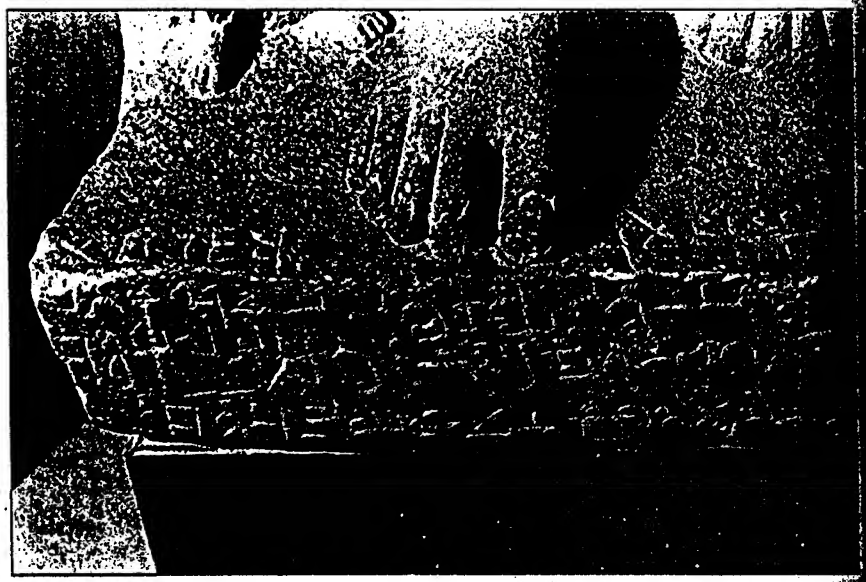
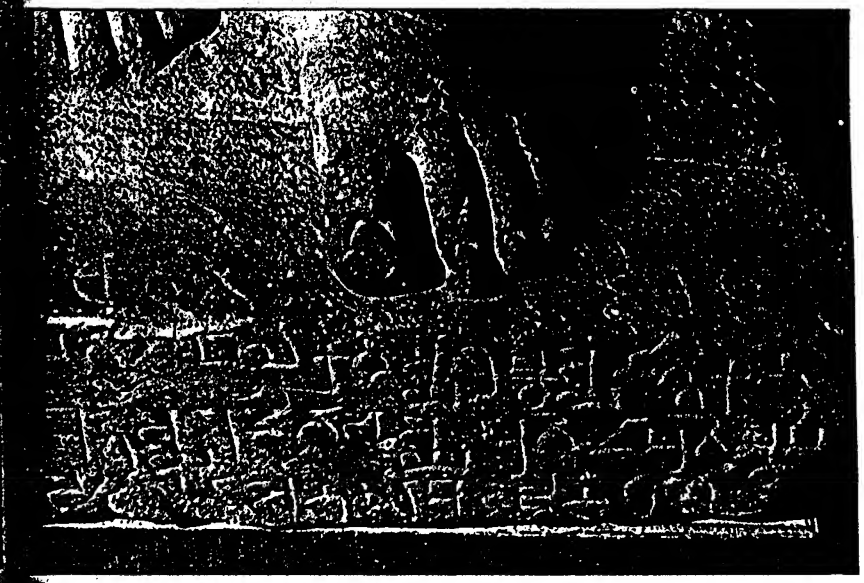


Right side enlargement of The Kuṣān Amitābha Inscription.



Left side enlargement of The Kuṣān Amitābha Inscription.

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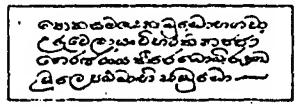

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The Early Chinese Buddhist Understanding of the Psyche: Chen Hui's Commentary on the *Yin Chih Ju Ching*

by Whalen Lai

It is often said that the early Chinese Buddhists misunderstood the doctrine of anātman (no-soul); that they subscribed to a notion of an indestructable soul (*shen pu-mieh*)[a] instead. In this essay, we want to investigate to what extent this is true to the time of An Shih-kao[b] and the tradition that developed out of his translations.[1]

An Shih-kao is the first major translator of Buddhist scriptures in China. It was he who introduced dhyāna practice and Hīnayāna texts and the basic teachings.[2] It was at a time prior to the rise of *ko-i*[c] Buddhism, which "matched the concepts" of Neo-Taoist reflections on nonbeing and Mahāyāna notions about śūnyatā (emptiness). The Sino-Buddhist conversation was then conducted more between Han Taoist reflections of the art of *yang-ch'i nien-shien*[d] (nurturing the breath and refining the soul) and the Hīnayāna catechism of the five heaps (skandhas), the twelve chains of causation (*nidānas, pratītya-samutpada*, both rendered as *yin-yüan*[e] in Chinese at times), the six faculties (*āyatanas*), the eighteen fields (*dhātus*), etc. The concept of *shen* (soul, psyche) was one cultural bridge mediating the two systems. This indestructible soul transmigrated from one life to the next as the carrier of karma that would effect retributions.

An important text attesting to this early Sino-Buddhist encounter is the mid-third century commentary on the *Yin-chi'ih-ju ching*[f] (*Sūtra on the Heaps, the Faculties, the Fields*).[3] The writer is Chen Hui,[g,1] a disciple of K'ang Seng-hui[h] of the state of Wu[i]

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in the Three Kingdoms. Chen Hui's understanding of *yin, ch'ih, ju*, i.e., *skandhas, dhātus, āyatanas*, is recognized as an important landmark in early Chinese Buddhism.[5] The *Yin-ch'ih-ju ching* itself is an important text and was recognized as such by Tao-an,[j] who later contributed a preface to it.[6] This sūtra belongs to the same class of texts as another of An Shih-kao's translations, the *Jen-pen yu-sheng ching*.[k] Both seek to explain the doctrine of the skandhas and the *nidānas*.[7] As Chinese exegeses go, Chen Hui's commentary on one compared favorably with Tao-an's commentary on the other.[8]

Chen Hui's commentary gives us a good indication of Chen Hui's thought, better in fact than his other important commentary, on the *An-pan shou-i ching* (*Ānāpāna-smṛti Sūtra*), which was the most popular *dhyāna-sūtra* introduced by An Shih-kao at the time. Unlike this other commentary, which contains a mix of opinions, Chen Hui's, K'ang Seng-hui's and more, the present text reflects Chen Hui's thinking more, even though it also cites, now and then, a certain "master's opinion." It seems that the master here is Chih Ch'ien[m] and *not* K'ang Seng-hui, as once thought.[9] Although indicative of Chen Hui's thoughts on many topics, for our more limited purpose, the text will be regarded as representing a general third-century Chinese response to the Hīnayāna concept of mind, *citta*.

1. Chen Hui on Shen *as Mind and as Spirit*

The Chinese Buddhists of the time had accepted the use of the word *shen*. *Shen* covered a multitude of functions and the uses of it by Chen Hui were no exception. The question is whether the Chinese or Chen Hui intended the term *shen* (soul) to mean:

(a) a permanent ātman, soul or self, or,
(b) just a continuity of personality or identity.

If it is the former, then it was a mistake; but if it is the latter, without implying the former, then it is not illegitimate. Most scholars eager to find Chinese distortions of the anātman ideal have chosen to highlight the former. However, it is interesting to note that Chinese Buddhists who said *shen pu-mieh* (the *shen* is not destroyed [at death]) never said, in this period, *shen ch'eng-chu*[n] (the *shen* is ever-abiding [permanent]).[10] Thus, we must not jump to the conclusion that the Chinese assumed the *shen* to be like the permanent ātman.

In the specific case under study here, Chen Hui clearly and readily uses *shen* in his exegesis. He never hesitates to call the *vijñāna* (consciousness) *shih-shen*[o] (consciousness-spirit). Though *shih* is the more standard term to render *vijñāna*, the use of the *shih-shen* compound, or even just *ching-shen*[p] (sublime spirit), is not impermissible—the word *shen* does cover the meaning of "*psyche*." *Hsin-shen*[q] well describes consciousness in general. One also must make certain allowances for poetic license. The fact that Chen Hui lavishes certain traditional attributes of *shen* upon the subtle workings of the *vijñāna* may not be philosophically consequential.

> (Consciousness-spirit) is subtle. It comes and goes without leaving any trace. Secretly it goes; silently it comes—so leaving and returning with no break in between. Because it cannot be seen, it is called *yin*[r] (dark, hidden; a pun on *yin* for *skandhas*).[11]

Such poetics is harmless; it enriches and does not distort the discussion.

If that should suggest granting to *shen* an omnipotence once associated with the spirit, we should remember that the Chinese Buddhists, then as well as later, took the opening verse in the *Dharmapada* to heart: the *Dharmapada* also grants the *citta* an omnipotence of thought—even though it only means by it the mind's authorship of karmic good and evil. Chen Hui says:

> When the mind thinks of good, good arises. When it thinks of evil, evil follows. This is because the mind is the basis of all reality. So the *Dharmapada* says, "The mind is the basis of all realities."[12]

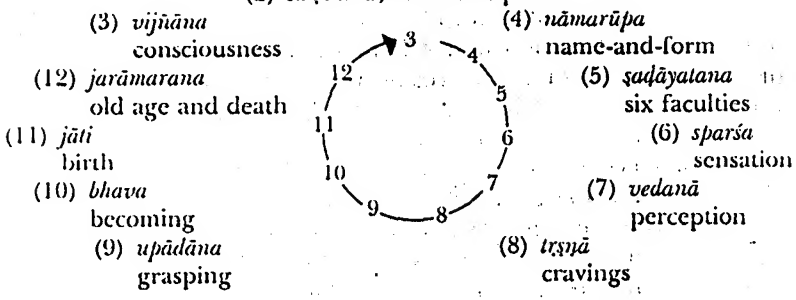
Such "moral idealism"—not to be confused with philosophic Idealism—is in keeping with the text and the spirit of the tradition.

When we examine Chen Hui's discussion of the "indestructible soul," we find that this *shen-pu-mieh* doctrine pertains to the survival of the *vijñāna* at death and its qualified continuance into the womb of its next rebirth:

Avidyā (Chinese: *wu-ming*,[5] "no-light") means darkness. It involves saṃskāra (*hsing*:[6] karmic impulse). The *shih-shen* (consciousness-spirit) of sentient beings is drowned in that ignorant darkness. Blinded, the spirit cannot distinguish safety from harm and thus would forsake fortune (the good) for misfortune (the evil). This consciousness-spirit is basically ignorant; it delights in bodily pains (of the senses; sensation) as if they were (desirable) pleasures. Not knowing that parents should be respected as one's elders, it goes forward and thereby takes on a body.[13]

Chen Hui is describing here the sequence of rebirth in accordance with the twelve chains of causation.

The Twelve *Nidānas* in terms of Rebirth



When Chui Hui talks of ignorance and the karmic impulse, he is pointing to the resilent nature of items (1) and (2). This pair remains operative until the person attains wisdom and nirvāṇa. By *shih-shen pu-mieh*, Chen Hui means the survival of item (3), the *vijñāna* (consciousness) surviving the corruption of the body during old age and death, or item (12). It is this entity which, being carried along by ignorance (1) and the karmic impulse (2), is being reborn, that is, conceived in the new parental womb to take on once more name and form, or item (4) in the diagram above. Name-and-form is attached to the pain of the senses (6 "of" 5). In craving after what it perceives (8 "of" 7), the process of suffering is rekindled (9, 10, 11, 12).

We can be sure that Chen Hui intended the *shen* to describe this process of the rebirth of the *vijñāna* in the new parental

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womb because, being a Confucian, he added the aside about the irreverent and lusting *shih-shen* intruding upon the parents—meaning, intruding upon them in their sexual intimacy, by which the new life is conceived.[14] Leaving aside whether the historical Buddha would or would not have accepted this later theory of the *vijñāna* as the skandha to survive death, the fact is that Chen Hui was only following the then canonical understanding of the *nidānas* and rebirth.

No permanent ātman is assumed in this scenario. The *vijñāna* disintegrates soon after conception and a new nascent consciousness is born—such that we usually cannot recall our past lives. Chen Hui knew this. Note the first sentence below:

The consciousness-spirit is dead, being lost now in the dark abyss of the three poisons and the five heaps, yet it will once more be receptive to the six feelings. The six deviances will adhere to it and will corrupt it. This is what is known as "seeing darkly in the dark."[15]

The rest describes the sequence from item (4) to item (7) in the twelve chains of causation.

Elsewhere, Chen Hui recapitulates the whole (3) to (12) series as follows:

Consciousness (*shih*: in Chinese, "to know") means knowledge. The *hun-ling*[u] (lit., the animus or male soul, but here, it probably denotes the psychic skandhas) receives (or is conceived into) the body (as the *rūpa-skandha*)[16] and immediately knows likes and dislikes, producing the mind of love and dislike (discrimination) . . . . By name (*tzu*)[v] is implied *rūpa* (form).[17] (The skandhas of) sensation, perception, will and consciousness constitute *nāma* (because they are psychical); earth, water, fire and wind (the four great elements), being visible, are called *rūpa* (material form) . . . . [A description of the flourishing or activism of the heap follows.] As the skandhas are already deluded, then because of lust or desire, the consciousness-spirit [in turn] conceives another body (i.e., in the next cycle of life, commencing with the chain of *bhava*: becoming) and life (*jāti*: birth) resumes again . . . . (Concerning *jarāmarana*, old age and death, the last link of the chain,) old age is when the four great elements wither and death is when life ends and the spirit (*vijñāna*) flies off (again).[18]

If the law of dependent co-origination innate to this chain is what proves the case of anātman, then Chen Hui can hardly be said to be ignorant of the doctrine of no permanent self or soul.

II. Chen Hui on the Skandhas

Truly to appreciate Chen Hui's understanding of Buddhism, we should therefore turn away from a singluar interest in *shen-pu-mieh* to the larger issue of how the basic paradigm of personality comes across in Chen Hui's exegesis. In other words, how well did Chen Hui understand the skandhas, which the Buddha had used to counter the notion of a self (ātman)? The following is a list of the five, with the rough English equivalents, the Chinese used by An Shih-kao to render the five, and the rough Chinese meanings of those borrowed Chinese terms:

The Five Heaps and Their Renditions

Sanskrit	English	Chinese	Ch. Meaning
1) *rūpa*	form, matter	*se* 色	"color"
2) *vedanā*	sensation	*tun* 痛	"pain"
3) *saṃjñā*	perception	*hsiang* 想	"think"
4) *saṃskāra*	will, volition	*hsing* 行	"proceed"
5) *vijñāna*	consciousness	*shih* 識	"know"

Chen Hui's understanding of the functioning of the five is not far off the mark.

Question: What are the five heaps?

> First (of the five) is form; the four great elements being visible (to the eye), they are called form.
>
> Second is sensation (lit., pain). This is where mental intent (*chih*)[W] locates what it wishes for (*yüan*).[x19] There, misery and fear of loss tax the emotions. For that, it is called (literally) pain.
>
> Third is perception. To perceive is to form (a mental image). Silent reflection is called thought.[20] The supporting base for thought is the senses.[21] When one looks for the source to that mental image, one finds that it slips already into the past (the last preceding moment). Therefore, is it called reflecting, (that is) the recalling of an image (gone by).
>
> Fourth is volition. The (special Chinese) script *hsing*[Y] means to do, to proceed, to go forward. The self might be over here but the mind would be dashing forward to no end, contemplating good or harboring evil, extending itself in all directions with [illegible]ly a place lying beyond its reach.
>
> Fifth is consciousness. *Shih* (for *vijñāna*) means "to know." Witnessing the doings of the will, the mind immediately knows. Thus, it is called "knowledge."[22]

Chen Hui's explanation measures well against modern textbook explanations of the same.

The basic rationale Chen Hui offers for the five is as follows: (1) Form is matter; it is the "knowables" of the solid, the congealing, the heated and the fluid, symbolized as earth, water, fire and wind (the four great elements). Because form is also the object of eye-consciousness, Chen Hui identifies it with the "visibles." (2) Sensation is what results from the faculties making contact with these, so Chen Hui locates them in the senses, a kind of outreach of the mind. The sensation may be positive or negative; Chen Hui ties that to the emotional responses to "pain," which was the Chinese term used to render "sensation" then. (3) Perception is the recognition of the objects so sensed. In referring to it as "reflection" chasing after an "image already gone by," Chen Hui perhaps shows his familiarity with the argument that the mental object (dharma) is an "after-image" of the sensed object of a split second ago.[23] We will reserve the discussion on (4) will and (5) consciousness until later.

The theory of the five heaps and the theory of the twelve chains were apparently two independent teachings of the Buddha demonstrating the anātman doctrine, such that the skandhas were not meant originally to follow any one sequential order, as some (not all) of them now do in the twelve chains. Still, the overlap is all too evident, and Chen Hui probably followed some exegetical tradition and seems to assume this sequential relationship. Put somewhat crudely, it is: forms (item 1), sensed (item 2) by the five senses or faculties are then perceived (item 3) by the mind faculty. The will (item 4) is what then runs forward and what is willed becomes known to consciousness (item 5). The items add up to the five skandhas.

In thus granting to will (saṃskāra) the function of primary

action,[24] Chen Hui has this comment on the will being "the seed of form":

> To delight is to love. To seed is to plant. So, as the six desires are aroused, the body (self) will by itself give birth to life. It will take form according to the saṃskāra (will-to-be). All living things exist because of will, for that it is known as the seed (of form).[25]

It is not known whether the "seed" imagery was or was not indebted to the Sautrāntika notion of the *bījas*, but it is clear that it led Chen Hui to associating it with the Taoist idea of an *élan vital*:

> This process is comparable to seeding below (ground) followed by the sprouting of the self above (ground). Or, it is like the primodial breath (*yüan ch'i*)[z] known to be born in spring, to bloom in summer, to wither in fall and to die in winter. As the hundred plants, grass and trees die on earth, the primodial breath hides itself once more underground, only to emerge again in spring. When the spring weather is mild and the times are harmonious, it bestirs below and the body (of plants) appears (above) anew. All beings sentient or nonsentient are encompassed by this primodial ether. They will rise and fall, grow and wither, dying only to be reborn again, round and round in the three realms seeing neither beginning nor end. Thus is the seed of consciousness called the seed (of the five heaps).[26]

In this case, the poetic license of this aside has philosophical ramifications, for it brings into the discussion of the skandhas the Han cosmogony of the one ether as the progenitor of all things. This moves Buddhism back towards *satkāryavāda*.

At one level, this is harmless. For example, the following open reference to the philosophy of change in the *I-ching*[aa] only lends support to the Buddhist notion of impermanence:

> *Ch'ien* and *k'un*[ab] (in the *I-ching*) are the basic trigrams; they mark the beginning and the end. Accordingly, too, myriad things rise and fall. The accomplished will fail; the lush will fade. Such is impermanence. Birth, old age, sickness and death, slave of evil and receptacle of sin, constitute suffering.[27]

At another level, though, the Han cosmological assumption

could lead to an important sinitic theory and a significant departure from the original. We will consider this below.

III. Chen Hui on Emptiness and Shou-i[ac]

The above reference to the *I-ching* made by Chen Hui ends with this additional note:

> All sentient beings have only subsequent existence (*mo yu*).[ad28] By returning to the origin (*pen*),[ae] they would naturally be empty (*wu*).[af29]

This theory of "original nothingness, subsequent existence" was derived from Han thought—not to be confused with Wei-Chin Neo-Taoist metaphysics. It also shows a synthesis of Hīnayāna *anātmavāda* and Mahāyāna *śūnyavāda* in the thought of Chen Hui himself. A word of explanation is called for here.

Though known for his commentaries on the works of An Shih-kao, Chen Hui was also a student of Chih Ch'ien, the first major translator in China and the person who apparently reworked an earlier Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, the *Ta-ming-tu-ching*.[ag] Chih Ch'ien used the term *pen-wu*[ah] to render *śūnyatā* (emptiness). Chen Hui took over his reading of an original nothingness, which he saw as lying behind the skandhas.

> Though young now, it will become empty when it is finally completed; emptied once more, this is called emptiness. The body is of the four great elements, but each of these will return to the origin. As they are never ours,[30] it is called not-mine (*fei-hsin*:[ai] literally not-of-the-body or not-self, the current Chinese for no-soul).
>
> Deeply perceiving the origin of the four matters and fully understanding the end of its aspiration, i.e., how it transmigrates in the three realms, forsaking one body at death only to take up another, accumulating only more suffering to no end; keeping your mind (hence) on the right meditation, making the three realms empty, and aspiring to attain the original nothingness in which all suffering would cease to exist—that is wisdom.
>
> The *Ming-tu* says, "The fool mistakes what is impermanent,

painful, empty and without self to be permanent, joyful, existing and with self." As the transcendental wisdom, *prajñā-pāramitā*, can transform this, therefore it is known as *Ta-ming*,[ai] the Great Wisdom.[31]

Because of the sinitic interest in some primal "one source" (*i-pen*),[ak] Chen Hui also incorporates the Han Taoist meditative technique known as guarding the *i* (*shou-i*), wherein the word *i* (intention) means that "initial stir of thought," the first moving away from the primal, passive, one-source mind, the nascent mental form prior to "words taking on form."[32] Guarding the *i* is the best means of preventing its going astray; eliminating this *i* is often deemed the way to recovering that primal psychic unity and harmony. By coincidence, *i* was then associated with saṃskāra or *cetanā*, then considered the root of good and evil. Since Buddhism also taught the technique of "mindfulness" as a means to purify the mind, the two *shou-i* traditions merged, possibly even in the Chinese title to the *Ānāpāna-anusmṛti-sūtra* itself, the *An-pan shou-i ching*. Chen Hui's reflection on how to terminate the skandhas through the contemplation of breath reflects that synthesis:

> Mysterious is the consciousness-spirit and hard to detect are the various heaps. However, by being in tune with truth and understanding the principle, one can see the working of the five heaps in one single breath.
>
> In the initial count (of breath), the breath is wind, that is, the heap of form. Reflecting on it and anticipating the pain, that is the heap of sensation. Together, these two constitute the heap of perception. Between the two (the initial breath and the arousal of perception) lies volition. Knowing that breath's intention is consciousness. Thus, in one breath can be found the five heaps.[33]

The first half of the passage reflects the Taoist ideal of *shou-i*, the second half the greater analytical acumen of Buddhist mindfulness. Though there is an infusion of sinitic motifs, this does *not* mean the abrogation of the Indian insights. The real sinicization occurs in a more subtle and hitherto unnoticed area.

IV. Chen Hui on the Hsin, I, Shih

In making this study of Chen Hui's commentary, I came across a very terse six-Chinese-character line that turns out to be the key to more than one important Chinese Buddhist development to come.[34] It involves the meaning of a set phrase, *shih san pen*[al] (or, here, *shih san shih*),[am] the three basics (or matters) of consciousness—a central topic of discussion from the third to the fifth century in Buddhist China. However, those exchanges being lost, we have only certain titles of correspondence to go by. Thus, we find it listed in the questions posed by Chinese correspondents to Kumārajīva:

> Wang Wei-yüan[an] inquiring about whether spirit exists in nirvāṇa;
> Wang (further) inquiring about *shen, hsin, i and shih*;[ao]
> Wang (further) inquiring about *shen-shih* (spirit-consciousness).
> Hui Yüan[ap] inquiring about *shen*.[35]

The *Li-tai san-pao chi*[aq] lists even more:

> Yen Yen-chin[ar] on dissociating the *shih* (consciousness).
> Chih Tan-t'i[as] on *shen-pen* (the basis of *shen*).
> Hsieh Fu[at] on *shih-san-pen*.
> Chih Tao-lin's[au] reply to Hsieh.
> Tai An-tao's[av] threefold exchange with Hsieh on the topic.
> Hui-yüan defending *hsin, i, shih*;
> Hui-yüan's inquiry on and discussions of *shen*.
> Chu Fa-tai[aw] inquiring of Tao-an on *shen*.[36]

The fact that the question raged in the third and fourth centuries, only to disappear after the fifth and be forgotten from the sixth on, has to indicate that it arose as a result of an imperfect Chinese understanding of the Buddhist model of the psyche; that a Taoist mind-set had colored the reading of *citta, manas*, and *vijñāna*—that is, until Kumārajīva corrected it, for the controversy seems to disappear after his period.

But what is the meaning of this *hsin, i, shih* trio and how does it affect the Buddhist appreciation of the structure of consciousness? Normally, the Chinese-Sanskrit correlation would be as follows:

Sanskrit	English equi.	Chinese		Ch. Meaning
citta	thought	*hsin*	心	mind, heart
manas	mind (faculty)	*i*	意	intention
vijñāna	consciousness	*shih*	識	to know

The one-to-one correlations seem proper enough, but when we take into consideration the meaning-matrixes of the two sets, differences rise.

The difference may be illustrated by Chen Hui's discussion of the relationship of the *i* to the mind and its object.

> When the eyes and consciousness meet, the latter distinguishes likes and dislikes. This is the same for the other of the six sensations. The *Lao-mo ching*[ax] (*Old Woman Sūtra*) says, "When the eyes meet form, this is *i*, which is (now of) the same (shape) as the form." The *Liao-pen* [*sheng-shih*] *ching*[ay] (*Sūtra Penetrating the Basis* [*of Life and Death*]) also says: "It is with the eye-organs following the form that consciousness is born."[37]

As senses make contact with objects in their individual fields, the mind takes on the form of the object.[38] This is the Buddhist understanding of the mental functions.

In an explicit reference to the *san-shih* (a variant of *san-pen*), Chen Hui cites his master:

> (My) master says, "When the eyes see form, there are three things. This applies to all six feelings."

From the context, I would assume that what the master meant was the necessary correlation of the subject, the object and the related consciousness. The eye-organ would contact form through the eye-consciousness; the ear-organ would contact sight through the ear-consciousness . . . ; and the mind-faculty (*manas*) would contact ideas (dharmas) through the mind-consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*). This would cover the "six feelings" or faculties. But Chen Hui reads it differently. He continues:

> The three things [*san-pen*] are *hsin, i, shih* (in Chinese: mind, intention, consciousness; in Sanskrit: *citta, manas, vijñāna*).[39]

This could not have been what his master, Chih Ch'ien, intended, because this set would *not* be applicable to all "six faculties." It is this discrepancy in the two sets that led to the questions for Kumārajīva, etc.

In six Chinese characters, Chen Hui reveals to us the reason for the problem:

> *i nien; erh tsò; san chou.*[az]
> The first (item) would start thinking;
> the second (item) then creates;
> the third (item) would seek after.
>
> *Nien* (to think) belongs to mind (*hsin*); *tso* (to create) belongs to intention (*i*); neither of these is the doing of consciousness. Good and evil cannot fall outside these three matters.[40]

Chen Hui is saying, more literally than a Sanskritist would deem proper:

> The unitary mind somehow gives rise to thought;
> the intention actually creates objects of it;
> the subject-object consciousness attaches itself to them.

It is the same sinitic structure that will emerge later in the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*: a pure mind, author of the three realms, devolves into being a dualistic, subject-object, consciousness.[41] The words *nien* and *tso* will be used in that later, Chinese-compiled text in a liberal fashion that a Sanskritist purist would find questionable. The *Awakening of Faith* does assume the mind as the *creator—tso* (creates) the three realms (*trilokas*) from out of its suchness (tathatā)-base—and preaches the "no-thought" (*wu-nien*) method as the means of recovering the pure mind.

This model of the relationship between *hsin, i, shih* is drawn, not from *citta, manas, vijñāna*, but from a Chinese theory of mind or psychic scheme first spelled out in the *Kuan-tzu*:[ba]

> Do not let things confuse the senses, or the senses the mind. This is what is meant by "inner *te*."[bb] If my mind is ruled, the senses are ruled. If my mind is pacified, the senses are pacified. What rules and what pacifies is the mind. The mind, however, hides another mind. Within the mind, there is this (deeper) mind

(originally, this is the spirit *shen*). Out of that mind of mind, there is first *i*, which precedes all speech. First there is *i*, then there is form. Only as there is form, can there be thought (*ssu*).[bc] After thoughts, come knowledge (*chih*).[bd] Any time the form of mind proceeds beyond knowledge, it will lose its vitality.[42]

Here, too, the *i* occupies the pivotal point that marks the passage from a passive mind to an active consciousness or knowledge (*chih*, a synonym of what would be *shih*, "to know," in the Sino-Buddhist scheme). What is *nien* in Chen Hui would be *ssu* in the passage above (another pair of synonyms).

When we compare the meaning of the Sanskrit matrix and the Chinese matrix of *hsin, i, shih*, the discrepancy becomes obvious. Whereas in the Indic trio, there is functional continuity and virtual identity in common usage (the terms are sometimes used interchangeably), in the sinitic trio, there is functional devolution and hierarchy:

hsin		*i*		*shih*	
citta	=	*manas*	=	*vijñāna*	Equivalence
mind	>	intention	>	consciousness	Hierarchy

Further, when we compare the structure assumed by Chen Hui and the one found in the discussion in the *Kuan-tzu*, their correspondence is clear and the rationale for the judgement against "knowlege" suddenly makes sense:

Common Structure				
MIND	>	MENTATION	>	KNOWLEDGE
passive, pure *wu-wei*		what activates *wu-pu-wei*		active, impure *wei*
"*tzu-jan*" nature				*wei* as the "artificial"
inactive yet activating all				

Kuan-tzu				
shen, hsin ever divine	>	*ssu* (to think)	>	*chih* (to know) ever mundane
Chen Hui				
hsin (mind) that *nien*	>	*i* (intention) that *tso*	>	*shih* (consci.) that *chou*
pure, higher, unitary mind				ill, dualist consciousness

With the final item ("mundane knowledge": *chih-shih*) being associated with the mind's fallen entrapment in the world of change and things (the "artificial" in Taoism and the "dualistic" in Buddhism), there is an implied negative evaluation of that consciousness. Meanwhile, on the positive side, the inactive mind is allowed the attribute of *wu-wei*, inactive yet activating all. This is why Chen Hui says "Neither *nien* nor *tso* belongs to the doings of consciousness [which grasps, *chou*, after worldly objects]." With consciousness thus condemned as mundane and dualistic, Chinese Buddhism long opted for "Mind Only" over "Consciousness Only" long before it knew of Yogācāra (Cittamātra, Vijñaptimātra).[43] The fusion of Buddhist and Taoist psychology in the same passage in Chen Hui's commentary means that it is often not easy to disassociate two different but interwoven matrixes of meanings. Take the following, for example:

> By "that which the *i* thinks about" [in An Shih-kao's translation] is meant the *i*. When it thinks of form, it becomes *hsing* [i.e., it promotes saṃskāra or active deeds]. Henceforth, it is plagued by sin [karma or unnatural action]. As there is sin, there is suffering.[44]

Here, we see the word *i* understood as the author of good and evil, as noted by the *Dharmapada*; as the creative potential of the spirit, as noted by the *Kuan-tzu*; as the form of the object the mind perceives or projects; and as the *cetanā*, or "initial stirring of mind," of which a contemplative should ever be mindful (*shou*). In such a fusion of meanings, the Chinese exegete synthesizes the native and the foreign tradition.

V. Conclusion

The present study is an analysis of certain elements in an early Chinese commentary on the *Yin-ch'ih-ju ching*. The question was posed how the intrusion of sinitic modes of thought might or might not have distorted the original. We have argued that the much publicized misunderstanding surrounding the doctrine of the "indestructable soul" may not be a mistake at all; that the use of *pen-wu*, or original nothingness, and *shou-i* may enrich the discussion without injecting alien value judgments; but that in the matter of a now-forgotten controversy over the exact meaning of *shih-san-pen* (the three factors of consciousness), a psychic structure indebted to the *Kuan-tzu* and one to emerge later in *The Awakening of Faith* turns out to be a most subtle sinicization of the Indic Buddhist essentials.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to comments and corrections from Dr. David Kalupahana in an earlier draft of this paper, which sought originally to approach the same materials in terms of the Chinese appreciation of Hīnayāna as a whole. The article has since been redirected to a more manageable topic. I am also grateful to the reviewer for the JIABS, whose many corrections and suggestions I have incorporated into this final version.

2. On the translations by An Shih-kao, see Ui Hakuju,[be] "*An Seikō no kenkyū*,"[bf] in *Yakugyō no kenkyū*[bg] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1971), pp. 1–467.

3. In *Taishō Daizōkyō* (henceforth T.) 33, no. 1694, pp. 9b–24c.

4. His given name is Hui; see Ui, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

5. This has been recognized by Eric Zürcher in his *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, I (Leiden: Brill, 1959), p. 54, as one of the three early works that should be studied. I have dealt with another of the three, the running commentary to the first chapter of the *Ta-ming-tu-ching* in "Before the Prajña Schools: The First Chinese Commentary on the *Aṣṭa.*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 6, 1 (1983), pp. 91–108.

6. Ui Hakuju has translated it in his *Shaku Dōan kenkyū*[bh] (Tokyo: iwanami, 1956), pp. 73–79.

7. So acknowledged too Chen Hui in the Preface, T. 33, p. 9b.

8. Tao-an's is listed in T. 33, pp. 1b–9b, just before the Chen Hui's. Overall, Tao-an's tends to be more pessimistic (probably because of the turmoil he lived through in his life), for his commentary airs a wholesale condemnation of the *i* (intention; see later discussion), arguing repeatedly for its negation, *fei-i*.[bi] Chen Hui would more patiently discern the good *i* and the bad *i* and

cultivate the inner life accordingly. The difference might lie in the two texts. In handling the twelve chains of causation, the *Jen-pen* text focuses on the third and fourth chain, that is, consciousness (*vijñāna*) and form (*rūpa*, or, *nāmarūpa*), whereas the *Yin-ch'ih* text focuses on the second, saṃskāra (will, karmic impulse). Tao-an repeatedly went behind the former pair to saṃskāra: thus he could readily advocate *fei-i*. But Chen Hui had to analyze the saṃskāra itself, because, as noted in his preface, it is none other than the "dark support" *yin-ch'ih* (a pun on skandhas, *āyatana*) of all reality itself (T. 33, p. 9b).

9. The master is never mentioned by name, but Chen Hui quotes there works translated or reworked by Chih Ch'ien, i.e., *Liao-pen sheng-ssu ching*, *Fa-chu-ching*[bj] (*Dharmapada*), *Ta-ming-tu ching* (*Astasāharikā Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra*); on the earlier opinion that it was K'ang Seng-hui, see Ui, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

10. I do not find the *ch'eng-chu* association made until *after* the Chinese have acquired the additional idea of a "permanent Buddha-nature" from the *Mahāparinirvāna-sūtra* in the fifth century. After that, it seems that Emperor Wu of Liang[bk] in the south made the connection, and Wei Shou[bl] still later in the north, in his summation of Buddhist teachings in the *Shih-Lao-chi*[bm] (*Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism*).

11. T. 33, p. 9c.

12. T. 33, p. 10a. Chen Hui studied under Chih Ch'ien who, working with Chu Chiang-yen,[bn] had reworked the Vigha-translated *Dharmapada* (it is still under Vigha's name).

13. T. 33, p. 13c.

14. In the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, it is said that the attraction to the father will mean rebirth as a female, to the mother as a male.

15. T. 33, p. 14c.

16. This is derived from the later expression, *wu-yin shou-hsin*[bo] (i.e., *pañca-upādāna-skandhas*) in which *nāma* (name) refers to the four psychic heaps and *rūpa* (form) to the physical heaps.

17. *Tzu* is as in *ming-tzu*,[bp] which can stand for *ming-se*[bq] (for *nāmarūpa*, name-and-form).

18. T. 33, p. 13c. The above is from a series of comments on individual lines dealing with the twelve chains. Certain punctuations and words considered corrupted are emended, and explanations added in brackets.

19. This reading is based on a splitting of *chih-yüan*[br] (aspiration) into *chih* (intent: what masters the mind-heart) and *yüan* (wish, hope).

20. The *Taishō* has the word "day, sun," and Ui takes it as "daily." But I believe that this is a corruption. Chen Hui is explaining *hsiang*[bs] by way of the Chinese—the formation of a *hsiang* (form, image) in the mind (*hsin*). We find a similar exegesis in Hsi Chao later.

21. Excepting abstract ideas (such as numbers and the Sanskrit alphabet), the mental image we have feeds on input from the senses.

22. T. 33, p. 9c.

23. The mind does not make direct contact with form; there is a relaying and delaying between sensation and the formation of a corresponding mental image. This doctrine was more developed in the Sarvastivāda *abhidharmas*.

24. To take form eventually as either the karma of body, mind or speech.

25. T. 33, p. 10a.
26. T. 33, p. 10ab.
27. T. 33, p. 10b.
28. The *Taishō* has *mi*[bt] for *mo*, which I take to be a corruption. If we stay with *mi*, then it would read: "When all sentient beings are yet to exist, the source and origin by itself is empty."
29. T. 33, p. 10b.
30. Emending the *Taishō* word *i* (already) for *chi* (one's own).[bu]
31. T. 33, p. 10b.
32. See the later citation from the *Kuan-tzu*. This meaning of *i* was first pointed out to me by T'ang Yung-t'ung[bv] in his *Han-Wei liang-Chin Nan-pei-chao Fo-chiao-shih*[bw] (Peking: Chung-hua reissue, 1955), pp. 142–143.
33. T. 33, p. 17a.
34. Including the eventual disagreement between the Hua-yen[bx] school (representing Mind-Only Idealism) and the Wei-shih[by] school (representing Indic Consciousness-Only).
35. T. 55, no. 2145, pp. 83–84. The last, by the way, shows that Hui Yüan was not above using *shen* in his discourse with Kumārajīva, though *shen* is absent in the *Ta-ch'eng ta-i chang*,[bz] T. 45, pp. 122b–143b.
36. T'ang Yung-t'ung, *op. cit.*, pp. 561–564.
37. T. 33, p. 10b.
38. In abhidharmic speculation, these forms even take certain specified, geometrical shapes.
39. For *mano-vijñāna*, the more standard term would be *i-shih*. Repeatedly, however, the Chinese glossed over this compound because of the native set that assumed only *hsin*, *i shih*.
40. T. 33, p. 10c. Text formatted for the sake of clarity. The opinion of the master should end where I punctuated it. Ui Hakuju feels that something is amiss here but confesses that he cannot decipher it. Ui's passage started my search, but now I cannot locate it.
41. On this, see my "A Clue to the Authorship of the *Awakening of Faith*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 2, 2 (1979), pp. 34–52.
42. From *Hsin-shu* II; my translation. See Allen Rickett, trans., *Kuan Tzu* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1965) for his.
43. See my, "The Meaning of Mind-Only (Wei-hsin): An Analysis of a Sinitic Mahayana Phenomenon," *Philosophy East and West*, 27, 1 (1977), pp. 65–83; and "*Hu-jan nien-ch'i*: Suddenly a Thought Rose, Sinitic Understanding of Mind and Consciousness," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 3, 1 (1980), pp. 42–59. The present article, as well as others in preparation, will lend further support to my contention that the sinicization of Buddhism often occurred at a level of connotative meaning, embedded in the Chinese language, of which the users themselves might not be conscious and which some purely textual scholars fail or refuse to acknowledge.
44. T. 33, p. 11a.

Chinese Terms

a.	神不滅	aa.	易經	ba	曾子
b.	安世高	ab.	乾坤	bb.	德
c.	慈救	ac.	守一	bc.	慮思
d.	素氣爲神	ad.	本無	bd.	知
e.	因緣	ae.	本	be.	宇井伯壽
f.	陰持入經	af.	無	bf.	安世高の研究
g.	陳慧	ag.	大明度經	bg.	譯經史研究
h.	康僧會	ah.	本然	bh.	釋道安研究
i.	[illegible]	ai.	非有	bi.	非意
j.	道安	aj.	大明	bj.	法定經
k.	人本欲生經	ak.	一本	bk.	梁武帝
l.	安般守意經	al.	識三本	bl.	護守
m.	支讖	am.	識三事	bm.	鏡若心
n.	神常住	an.	王弼注	bn.	空解炎
o.	識神	ao.	神不意識	bo.	五陰受身
p.	精神	ap.	慧遠	bp.	名字
q.	人神	aq.	歷代三寶記	bq.	名色
r.	陰	ar.	趙達之	br.	志魄
s.	無明	as.	支曇諦	bs.	想 (心相)
t.	行	at.	謝敷	bt.	未
u.	魂靈	au.	支道林	bu.	己 已
v.	守	av.	釋安通	bv.	陽 用 形
w.	[illegible]	aw.	[illegible]	bw.	漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史
x.	陰	ax.	[illegible]	bx.	華嚴
y.	[illegible]	ay.	了本生死經	by.	唯識
z.	元氣	az.	一念二作三本	bz.	大乘大義章

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Notes on the Buddha's Threats in the *Dīgha Nikāya*

by A. Syrkin

The Pāli canonical texts (and particularly those of the "Longer Sayings," *Dīgha nikāya*) provide us with rich evidence on the Buddha's image. We often find here (DN II.8; III.1.2; IV.6; a.o.) his typical characteristics: "an Arahat, fully awakened . . . abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to mortals willing to be led, the teacher of gods and men" (*arahaṃ sammā-sambuddho vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno, sugato loka-vidū anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi, satthā deva-manussānaṃ . . .*).[1] Apart from these characteristics, there are numerous data not only on the Buddha's activity as preacher and tutor, but on his everyday life as well, on his habits, his relations with different people—monks, laymen, etc. All this evidence has been frequently treated in scientific and popular literature. There is, however, a certain trait of the Buddha's behaviour which has not been analysed sufficiently. Insignificant as it may seem in the broad context of the cardinal Buddhological problems, it repeats itself more than once in the canonical scripture and is closely connected with the principal function of the "fully awakened" arahat.

The image of the Buddha necessarily presupposes the salutary activity of a preacher. His characteristics, partly quoted above, describe him as an incomparable tutor (*sārathi*) of men, teacher (*satthā*) of gods and men, etc. A major part of his life was dedicated to preaching the Dharma, and his teachings, constituting the essence of the canonical scripture, contain rich material for analysing the Buddha's didactical methods. With respect to these methods, one can stress here the evidently pragmatic character of the Buddha's approach to his listeners, whose intellect, morals, social position, etc., he usually took into

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consideration.[2] It has already been noted, in particular, that the Buddha resorted to different means of instruction, combining "flexibility and order, authority and freedom," etc.[3] Regarding this combination we can note here a peculiar device of the Buddha's argumentation which permits one to speak of some specific traits of the teacher's image.

In the third sutta of DN (*Ambaṭṭha sutta*-DN III.1. 19 sq.), arguing with young Ambaṭṭha, who places brāhmaṇas above kṣatriyas, the Buddha threatens his opponent: "If you do not give a clear reply, or go off upon another issue, or remain silent, or go away, then your head will split into pieces on the spot" (*sattadhā muddhā phalissati*). Ambaṭṭha is unable to give explanations (regarding his own family) and the Buddha repeats his question, together with the threat, adding that such is the punishment for those who do not "answer a reasonable question put by a Tathāgata" thrice. Hereupon, as an embodiment of this threat, a godly spirit, *yakkha,* appears in the sky bearing a thunderbolt and ready to split the youth's head; and Ambaṭṭha, "terrified, startled and agitated," seeks protection from the Buddha, acknowledging him to be right.[4] The subsequent repetition and justification of this threat by the Buddha, together with the apparition of the menacing *yakkha,* evidently makes this idiom not so harmless as T.W. Rhys Davids supposes it.[5] The unprejudiced reader gets an impression that Ambaṭṭha does not perish (like Śākalya in BU III.9. 26—cf. below) only because he repents at the right time.

A similar use of these words is found in the *Cūḷasaccakasutta* ("Lesser discourse to Saccaka"), MN no. 35. The Buddha thrice asks a certain Saccaka (called also Aggivessana) a question concerning the material shape of the Self (as we see, the dispute is much more abstract here than in DN III), and adds hereupon: "Whoever, Aggivessana, on being asked a legitimate question up to the third time by the Tathāgata does not answer, verily his skull splits into seven pieces." Then, Ambaṭṭha's situation is repeated: a menacing *yakkha* with the thunderbolt appears, confirming the Buddha's threat, and frightened Saccaka also seeks protection from the Buddha.[6]

An analogous expression is found in *Kūṭadanta sutta* (DN V, 21), where the same argument again proves to be effective: the brāhmaṇa Kūṭadanta confirms his approval of the Buddha's words "for he who approves not as well-said that which has been well spoken by the *samaṇa* Gotama, verily his head would split in twain" (*muddhā pi tassa vipateyya*).[7] A similar threat is mentioned in *Pāṭika sutta* (DN no. 24), where it appears in a noteworthy context. The Buddha, with evident satisfaction tells here about the disgraceful defeat of certain naked ascetics (*acela*): Korakkhattiya (1.7 sq.), who behaved like a dog and was reborn among asuras; Kandaramasuka (1.11 sq.), who died an inglorious death in spite of his austerities; and, finally, Pāṭikaputta (1.16 sq.) whom he repeatedly threatened in the same "head-splitting" way alluding to the god's will (1.16; 18: *muddhā pi tassa vipateyyāti*). He continues to relate mockingly how Pāṭikaputta decided to approach him, saying: "I am coming, friend, I am coming," writhed about then and there and was unable to rise from his seat" (1.21 sq.: 2.2 sq.). This humiliating detail appears here as a result of miraculous power exercised by the Buddha (cf. below, note 25). Ridiculous rather than fatal, this detail is repeated many times in a style typical of Pāli canonical texts, whereupon the Buddha (again, repeatedly) compares Pāṭikaputta to a jackal, who, deeming himself to be the king of beasts and imitating the lion's roar (a usual metaphor for the Buddha's sermon), emitted but "a puny jackal's whine" (2.8 sq.).[8]

There are a number of analogous expressions in Pāli canonical literature, serving here evidently as a common threat, oath, or conjuration. Their idiomatic proverbial character does however, as we have seen, exclude the belief in their efficiency. In most cases these words are pronounced by other people. An interesting example is found in the *Sutta-nipāta* (V.1). Here, one brāhmaṇa threatens another who will not give him alms: "*sace me yācamānassa bhavaṃ nānupadassati sattame divase tuyhaṃ muddhā phalatu sattadhā*" (983; cf. a characteristic device of the number symbolism). It appears, however, that this oath is ineffective in the present case, whereupon the cursed brāhmaṇa seeks its explanation, which can be given by the Buddha alone (987 sq.; 1004 sq.). The Buddha's answer (1026) presents a kind of metaphorical interpretation, seemingly more compatible with his doctrine: "Ignorance (*avijjā*) is the head, know this; knowledge (*vijjā*) cleaves the head, together with belief, thoughtfulness, meditation, determination and strength"[9] (this

allegory seems somewhat inconsistent with the spirit of the scenes from Ambaṭṭha or Pāṭika suttas mentioned above). This explanation has some analogies in Pāli canonical tradition—so, according to the *Dhammapada*, "The knowledge (*ñattam*) that a fool acquires, far from being to his advantage, destroys his bright share of merit and cleaves his head" (72).[10] Another parallel is found at *Milinda pañha* IV.2.25: "If any one, out of jealousy, were to rise up any obstacle in that case, then would his head split into a hundred or into a thousand pieces"[11] (according to the context, the violation of the prescribed order of alms-giving is meant here—cf. *Sutta-nipāta*, 983 sq.).

There also are examples of the "head-splitting" curse used proverbially—as a punishment for different transgressions but without direct connection with Buddhist teaching. Such are, e.g., conditional conjurations in the Jātakas—in case of a deliberate lie ("if my lips are speaking lies, then burst my head in seven"—J 489); as a punishment for eating a human being (J 513; 519; 537—ogres are meant here); for killing a friend (J 518); etc.[12] In *Saṃyutta nikāya* II, 1.9 Rāhu, lord of asuras, is afraid of the Buddha's exhortation (though containing no threat) to set the moon (Candimā) at liberty (a well-known myth serving as an explanation of lunar eclipses) and says: "Now let my head in seven pieces rive, Ne'er let me happy be while yet I live. If, had I not let Candimā go free, The Buddha's verse had not demolished me."[13] In a later text of the *Dhammapada* commentary (*Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, ca. 450 A.D.) we find several examples of similar usage—cf. I. 1 (for non-assistance of "a sin-abhorring Law-revering Elder"); I.3 (a mutual curse of two ascetics, one of them, Nārada, being the Buddha himself in his former birth); I.11; etc.[14] It seems, however, that this formula goes beyond the sphere of purely idiomatic proverbial usage and also requires (especially in DN and MN) an "extraphilological" approach. One can be reminded here of some interesting parallels, both verbal and functional, beyond the Buddhist tradition.

In this connection we shall briefly touch upon some traits of admonition in Hindu *śruti* texts—the early *Upaniṣads*. These traits again look rather unexpected within the framework of precepts intended to lead to the highest bliss. So the words of Yājñavalkya (one of the most authoritative and esteemed

Upaniṣadic sages who, now and then, preaches the highest truth) about Ātman are concluded in BU III.9.26 (cf. ŚB XI.6.3.11) with a curse on his opponent Śākalya, whose guilt consists only of ignorance. Much like the Buddha, Yājñavalkya says that Śākalya's head will fall off (*mūrdhā te vipatiṣyati*) if he does not answer his question (concerning the highest Being taught in the Upaniṣads—*aupaniṣadam puruṣam*).[15] It is not bluster: Śākalya is unable to answer, his head falls off and robbers take away his bones. ŚB XI.6.3.11 adds some details: Yājñavalkya curses Śākalya, predicting that he will die in an inauspicious place and time, and that even his bones shall not be brought home.[16] Thus it happens. The traditional commentary of Śaṃkara explains that Śākalya was punished for not having respected the Knower of Brahman (cf. also ŚB XI, 4.1.9),[17] yet the punishment still appears to be unmerited, for it does not befall other opponents who argue with Yājñavalkya during the same dispute (at the court of King Janaka, who promised to give a thousand cows and gold to the wisest brāhmaṇa). A similar threat is addressed by Yājñavalkya to another of his opponents, Gārgī Vācaknavī. He warns the woman to be moderate in questioning: "Gārgī, do not question too much lest your head fall off. Verily, you are questioning too much about a divinity about which we are not to ask too much" (III.6.1).[18] This time, curiosity is the crime (Gārgī's consequent questions lead to the basis of the highest worlds of Brahman); she, however, keeps silent and remains alive. This curse is used in the same dispute against Yājñavalkya himself. Uddālaka Āruṇi (also one of the greatest sages, who preaches particularly the famous *tat tvam asi*—"that art thou" in ChU VI.8.7 sq.) threatens him in the same manner, but Yājñavalkya knows the right answer (BU, III.7.1 sq.). In ChU, Śilaka Śālāvatya (I.8.6) and Pravāhaṇa Jaivali (I.8.8) use it in a talk (not a dispute). Later, Uṣasti Cākrāyaṇa, a brāhmaṇa, poor but versed in ritual, uses it three times (I. 10, 9–11; 11.3–9) while warning the priests not to recite certain texts without knowledge. The curse is variegated in Aśvapati Kaikeya's (a kṣatriya, like the Buddha) words to six brāhmaṇas, whom he has previously accepted as pupils. He threatens them, respectively, with the loss of their heads, with blindness, loss of breath, dissolution of the body, bursting of the bladder, and the withering of feet, did they not come to him

for instruction (V, 12.2; 13.2; 14.2; 15.2; 16.2; 17.2);[18] among them is Uddālaka Āruṇi, who has brought to him the five other brāhmaṇas. These curses are motivated by allegorical interpretations of those insufficient definitions, with which the brāhmaṇas try to describe Ātman.

As in Buddhist tradition, tribute here is paid to a common idiom. This idiom was evidently widespread—also irrespective of exposing the Vedāntic doctrine (be it the situation of admonishing a pupil, arguing with opponents, etc.). So, e.g., we read in BU I.3.24: "Let this king strike off this man's (my) head (if I say) that . . .";[20] in ŚB III.6.1.23, it serves as punishment for eating or drinking that which belongs to gods, etc. At the same time, the Upaniṣadic texts show perhaps still more clearly that this usage was not so harmless. Again, we come upon a teacher who tries to frighten or to humiliate his listener—a device rather incompatible with preaching the highest truth, which should lead to perfection and bliss. This "incompatibility," however, does not seem to be unique. The curse, pronounced by a divine teacher is not uncommon in other religious traditions. Let us be reminded of the Christ's image, marked sometimes in the Gospels by wrath, condemnation, threats, etc.[21]

Recapitulating the Pāli canonical evidence and some parallels adduced above—the teacher's evident aggressiveness, on the one hand, and his salutary function (now and then explicitly expressed in benevolent deeds and revelations), on the other—one can speak of a certain ambivalence. As we have seen, it refers not only to mortals (like Yājñavalkya, Satyakāma, a.o.), but, what might appear more strange at first sight, to a higher being, the embodiment of complete perfection—the Buddha and some other saviours as well.[22]

The different aspects of this ambivalence cannot all be treated in the present article. So, e.g., we are not dealing here with its aesthetic function (which is displayed in canonical texts similar to those of "secular" fiction).[23] These inconsistencies can also be interpreted (especially in cases of the divine teacher) in connection with a well-known universal phenomenon testified to with respect to objects of cult—as a particular instance of *coincidentia oppositorum*.[24] This factor, however, can scarcely be applied to all such cases, for they touch upon gods and mortals as well, and reveal in this respect an evident resemblance between both.

It seems that this evidence relating to the specific atm sphere of the religious admonition can also be connected wi another important phenomenon—the process of "Desce (resp. "humanization"). This act usually concerns the divi (or, anyway, enlightened and wise) creature who is already pe fected, has risen above the world's vanity, and is provided wi the highest knowledge, but who nevertheless returns to tl world to bring salvation to ordinary people—the Buddh Viṣṇu, especially in his last *avatāras* (one of which, besid Kṛṣṇa, was that of the Buddha, incorporated by Vaiṣṇava do matics), etc. One can assume that this function itself preven the saviour from indifference towards human values, since l virtue of his aim he cannot disregard them. Descending to layman's level, he finds himself faced with the necessity to ass ciate, i.e., to use mutual language, with people who feel ar think in terms of their level's categories and values. To adju himself to this level, to be understood by them, and to make h admonitions effective, the teacher—the Buddha, the Upaniṣ dic sage, etc.—must adopt a definite strategy of behaviour, certain pragmatism. He does not neglect, therefore, such d vices which seem to him appropriate for the sake of final su cess, as threats, curses, humiliation, etc., though these devic are sometimes inconsistent with his own doctrine, as, e.g., in th Buddha's resorting to miracles (*iddhi*), generally denounced h him.[25] Even the most eccentric of them (like those of "fools fo Christ's sake") have a psychological motivation and a therapeu tic value. Fulfilling his mission, the saviour passes thus to th level of profane distinction between the subject and the objec the Self and the not-Self, and other opposites which result fro this distinction.[26] Compared to his genuine perfection an grace, this transition appears as a kind of spiritual and mor degradation, while corresponding inconsistencies look like th sequence of his "humanization"[27] rather than that of the per fect *coincidentia*. It seems that DN and some other texts presen evidence of such "humanization" of the Buddha's image, dis played in an obvious descent to his opponents' level (certai "human" traits were, by the way, observed with respect to th Buddha's former births as the Bodhisattva).[28]

Similar notes, with corresponding modifications, can b made with respect to Upaniṣadic teachers endowed with high est wisdom. So, apart from the "head-splitting" motif, one o

them, Satyakāma Jābāla (who suffered once from the strictness of his teacher, Haridrumata Gautama—ChU IV. 4 sq) himself behaves with a strictness which looks more like cruelty, driving his pupil Upakosala almost to suicide (ChU IV.10). In the same chapter (ChU IV. 1–2), we find another sage, Raikva, who displays coarseness, avidity, and voluptuousness before he agrees at last to accept a pupil. The Upaniṣadic evidence thus "lowers" the image of some preceptors which, by the way, cannot always be justified by the pupils' behavior—the latter, on the contrary, are far from opposing the doctrine and are full of respect and humility.

We come here upon another aspect of the situation (more typical, perhaps, of the Hindu than of the Buddhist tradition). The teacher's "descent" is correlated to the adept's humility; a self-denying, suffering pupil meets with an illuminated though sometimes rude and merciless teacher. This situation partly corresponds to the traditional regimentation of the *brāhmacārin*'s status. His way of life in the house of his teacher—respecting the latter like a deity, serving him, tending his house, begging for him when necessary, waiting upon his relatives, etc.—is manifoldly reflected in ancient *smṛti* literature.[29] The law explicitly prescribes him to avoid praise and strive for contempt (*Mānavadharmaśāstra*, II, 162). Even divine or semi-divine creatures are subject to these rules (cf. the trials of the god Indra and asura Virocana while living as pupils with Prajāpati, ChU VIII. 7 sq.). The idea of humble, respectful approach is evidently reflected in the name of the genre we are dealing with: *upaniṣad* from *upa-ni-sad;* "to sit down at" (i.e., at the feet of another, to listen to his words).[30]

Returning to the Buddhist tradition, we can speak likewise of certain rules and restrictions defining the humble status of the devotee, the bhikkhu. The *Pātimokkha* (*Pārājika, Saṃghādisesa*), *Cullavagga* (V, X), *Brahmajāla sutta* (DN, I. 1. 18–27), etc., contain a number of characteristic details concerning obedience, begging, etc. (the rules for women, bhikkhunī, being still more strict and humiliating).[31] We also find here the device of premeditated denigration of one's own body (DN XX. 5, etc.; cf. *Maitrī Upaniṣad* I.3), though in a manner typical of his "middle-way" approach the Buddha generally used to rebuke excesses of this kind practised by certain ascetics. One can suggest that the bhikkhu's behavior, combining social degradation and spiritual ascent, is also correlated here with the teacher's "descent" to man's weak nature. This Hindu-Buddhist parallel needs, however, substantial reservations, especially with respect to the evidence adduced above. The cases we are dealing with pertain not to obedient pupils, but to stubborn opponents (Ambaṭṭha or Pāṭika before the Buddha; Śākalya or Gārgī before Yājñavalkya, etc.). Some of them who, like Ambaṭṭha's teacher Pokkharasādi, pronounce in the end the traditional formula: "*Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi . . .*" and become lay disciples (*upāsaka*) or bhikkhus, are far from being treated like Upakosala in ChU IV. 10. On the other hand, the Buddha can be compared in this respect to Yājñavalkya or Uddālaka rather than to Raikva, or even Satyakāma.

Nevertheless, the manner of treating the opponent in both traditions appears to be rather similar, and in our opinion can be better understood in the context of the pragmatic behavior which marks the beneficial salutary function of the teacher. One can add that the saviour's "humanization" is transitory by nature; it is limited by the sphere of corresponding "lower" contact. The enlightened teacher does not cause damage to his own perfection—already present (the Buddha, Kṛṣṇa, etc.) or implicitly achieved by him upon the end of his earthly existence (Upaniṣadic sages). On the contrary, such intentional[32] profane contacts, necessarily accompanying the mission of preaching, magnify this perfection. As we know, the state of complete illumination (*sammā-sambodhi*), which the Buddha displays in his last earthly existence, assumes his function of proclaiming to others the truth which he, himself, has discovered and realized. This distinguishes him from another kind of Buddha—the "individual," "silent" *pacceka-buddha*, who has also grasped the truth, but is unable to proclaim it to mankind (cf. *Puggalapaññatti*, I.29) and is inferior to the preaching Buddha. We have already cited (see note 2) an example of the Buddha's words concerning the manifold ways which he had to follow for the sake of his high mission. It may be worth while to note here another parallel, the words perhaps still more heartfelt, acknowledging and justifying this "humanization"—those of the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 9. 19–22; cf. ibid. 10.33): "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to

all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the Law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."

Notes

Following abbreviations are used below: BU = *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad;* ChU = *Chāndogya Upaniṣad;* DN = *Dīgha nikāya;* DR = *Dialogues of the Buddha*, transl. from the Pāli by T.W. (and C.A.F.) Rhys Davids, Vol. I–III. London, 1899, 1910, 1921; DRC = *The Dīgha nikāya*, ed. by T.W. Rhys Davids and J.E. Carpenter, Vol. I–III, London, 1890, 1903, 1910; J = *Jātaka;* MN = *Majjhima nikāya;* PU = *The Principal Upaniṣads*, ed. with introd., text, transl. and notes by S. Radhakrishman, London, 1953; ŚB = *Śatapatha brāhmaṇa.*

1. DRC I p. 49, DR I p. 67, etc. Cf. with respect to these characteristics: R.O. Franke. "Das einheitliche Thema des Dīgha = nikāya," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Bd. 27, 1913, S. 198–216, 276–304; Idem. "Der Buddha als 'ernst = bedacht und vollbewust,' " *Beiträge zur Literaturgeschichte und Geistesgeschichte Indiens. Festgabe H. Jacobi*, Bonn. 1926, S. 327–330.

2. See e.g. *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka* II. 36: "For in elucidating the law, Sāriputra, I use hundred thousands of various skillful means, such as different interpretations, indications, explanations, illustrations . . . I myself also, Sāriputra, . . . am preaching the law to gods and men with able means, such as several directions and indications, various arguments, reasons, illustrations, fundamental ideas, interpretations, paying regard to the dispositions of creatures whose inclinations and temperaments are so manifold"; II.42: "I know the disposition and conduct, the various inclinations of *koṭis* of living beings in this world . . ."; cf. below II.43; 48; etc.—*The Saddharma-puṇḍarīka or the Lotus of the True Law*, transl. by H. Kern. Delhi, 1974, pp. 39 sq.

3. See W. Stoesz, "The Buddha as teacher," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 46, N:2, 1978, pp. 139, 149 sq.

4. DR I, pp. 116 sq. cf. ibid., note 3 for some parallels from other sources.

5. "Curious threat—which never comes to anything, among the Buddhists, and is apparently never meant to"—ibid. note 3.

6. *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings* (*Majjhima nikāya*), tr. from the Pāli by I.B. Horner, Vol. 1, London 1954, p. 285. The epithet of *yakkha:* Vajirapāṇi ("Thunderbolt-bearer"), serving also as a common epithet of Indra, permits one to suggest that the latter appears here himself in the guise of a *yakkha* (ibid., note 2; cf. C.E. Gogage, "The place of Indra in Early Buddhism," *Ceylon University Review*, Vol. III, N:1, 1945, p. 52).

7. DRC I. p. 143, DR I, p. 181.

8. DR III, pp. 19 sq.; 28 sq. These scenes can be regarded as evide a certain humour in the genre of Buddhist suttas. Cf. P.V. Bapat, different strata in the literary material of the Dīgha nikāya," *Annals Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 8, pt. 1. 1926, p. 13; K. S stücker, "Humor in den Reden Buddhas," *Buddhistischer Weltspiegel*, Jhr N:1, 1921, S 37 sq.

9. *Sutta-nipāta*, ed. by D. Andersen and H. Smith, Oxford, 1947, p sq.; *The Sutta-nipāta*, tr. from Pāli by V. Fausböll (in: *Sacred Books of the* Vol. X, pt. II). Delhi, 1968, pp. 185 sq., 189.

10. *The Dhammapada, with introd. essays, Pāli text, English transl. and no* S. Radhakrishnan, London, 1958, p. 182.

11. *The Questions of King Milinda*, tr. from Pāli by T.W. Rhys David I), Delhi, 1975, p. 222.

12. Cf. *The Jātaka*, ed. V. Fausböll, Vol. I London, 1962, p. 54 (*ni kathā*), Vol. IV, 1963, p. 320; Vol. V, 1963, pp. 33, 92, 493; 47; etc. (*Stories of the Buddha's former births*, tr. from the Pāli, London, 1957, Vol. I 201; Vol. V, pp. 17, 50; 269; 47; etc.).

13. *The Book of the Kindred Sayings* (*Saṃyutta nikāya*), tr. from Pāli by Rhys Davids, pt. I, London, 1950, p. 72.

14. Cf. *Dhammapada Commentary*, ed. H.C. Norman, Vol. I, Lon 1970, pp. 17, 41–42, 134; Vol. IV, p. 125, (*Buddhist Legends*, tr. by I Burlingame, pt. 1, London 1969, pp. 156, 168–169, 231, etc.).

15. PU, p. 243; cf. W. Ruben, "Über die Debatten in den alten Up sad's," *"Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft"*, Bd. 83, 192 241 sq.

16. An especially severe threat in the context of Hindu burial rites. *Āśvalāyana-gṛhya-sūtra* IV, 5; *Mānavadharmaśāstra* V. 59 etc. (*The Gṛhya-sūt* tr. by H. Oldenberg, pt. 1, Delhi, 1973, pp. 245 sq. a.o.).

17. Cf. *The Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, tr. by J. Eggeling, pt. V, Delhi, 1966, 117; 53; *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad with the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, tr. Swāmī Mādhavānanda, Calcutta, 1975, pp. 387 sq.

18. PU, p. 223. Corresponding evidence of BU is found respectively ŚB XVIII (rec. *Kānva*) or SB XIV (rec. *Mādhyandina*).

19. Cf. a similar conditional threat by a teacher to his pupil in ŚB 5.3.13: "I will become thy pupil, reverend sir." He replied, "If thou hadst spoken thus, thy head would have flown off: come, enter as my pupil!"—*Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa*, pt. V, p. 85.

20. PU, p. 161.

21. See, for example, Mt. 10. 34 sq.; 11.20 sq.; 12.34 sq.; 13.40 sq.; 23. sq.; 25.41 sq.; Mr 9.19 sq.; Lc 9.41 sq.; Jn 2.15 sq.; etc. Cf. C. Jung, *Answe Job*, Princeton, 1973, pp. 44 sq.; 74 sq. (in particular, his notes on the image the "wrathful Lamb"); A. Syrkin, "K xarakteristike induistskogo panteon *Trudy po vostokovedeniju. Oriental Studies.* II.1, Tartu, 1973, pp. 165 sq.; 182 s etc.

22. Cf. also some "negative" traits of the Viṣṇu's embodiment, Kṛṣṇ compatible with his salutary function: W. Ruben, *Krishna, Konkordanz u Kommentar der Motive Seines Heldenlebens*, Istanbul, 1944, S 253 sq.; 284 (a la

of constancy, patience, charity); E.G. Suhr, "Krishna and Mithra as Messiahs," *Folklore*, Vol. 77, 1966, pp. 211 sq.; C.G. Hospital, "Paradox and divine wickedness in the Krishnakarnamrita: Reflections on the uses of discrepant symbols," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. XV, N: 1–2, 1980, pp. 59 sq.

23. Regarding the combination of threats and salutary admonitions in DN, BU, ChU, etc., (cf. also the interwoven motifs of curse and grace in the Naciketas history of *Kaṭha upaniṣad*) one can suggest that such contradictions, brought forward by a literary text, can lead to the "short-circuit" of opposite emotions and serve thus as an instrument of aesthetic effect (like "catharsis"). Cf. L. Vygotskij, *Psixologija iskusstva*, Moskva, 1968 pp. 270 sq.; A. Syrkin, "Zametki o stilistike rannix upanišad," *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii*, 1971, N: 2, pp. 99–100.

24. See: L. Renou, "L'ambiguité du vocabulaire du Ṛgveda," *Journal Asiatique*, t. 231, 1939, pp. 161 sq.; M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1953. pp. 126 sq.; 393; W.D. O'Flaherty, *Ascetism and eroticism in the mythology of Śiva*, London, 1973, pp. 33 sq.; Syrkin, "K xarakteristike," pp. 167 sq.; etc.

25. Cf. DN XI. 3 sq.: "I perceive danger in the practice of mystic wonders that I loathe, and abhor, and am ashamed thereof" (DR, I, p. 278) and, on the other hand—the Buddha's attitude in *Pāṭika sutta* (DN XXIV, 1.4 sq.).

26. Cf. A. Syrkin, "K sistematizacii nekotoryx ponjatij v sanskrite," *Semiotika i vostočnye jazyki*, Moskva, 1967, pp. 152 sq.

27. Cf. above, note 21, on the "humanized" image of Christ as a substantial detail of his earthly apparition. Cf. also notes on the "divine-become-human" with respect to Kṛṣṇa's image in: Hospital, "Paradox," p. 67.

28. Cf. Ruben, "Krishna," S.258 on some tricks of the bodhisattva in Buddhist narrative literature.

29. See, e.g., *Mānavadharmaśāstra* II. 71 sq., 108, 130 sq., 198, 233, etc. Cf. in this connection: R.K. Mookerji, *Ancient Indian education (Brahmanical and Buddhist)*. Delhi, 1960, pp. 93 sq.; 184 sq.; H.W. Gensichen, "Zum Meister-Jünger-Verhältnis im Hinduismus," *Wort und Religion. Kalima ha dini*, Stuttgart, 1969, S. 340–353, etc.

30. Cf. M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, Bd. I. Heidelberg, 1956, S. 105.

31. See S. Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, Bombay, 1960; Mookerji, *Ancient*, pp. 414 sq., etc.

32. The Buddha's traditional biographies speak of his decision to stay with people and to instruct them though he himself is freed and can leave this world (MN 1.26, etc.). According to *Mahāvagga* 1.5, having reached the bliss of emancipation, the Buddha first doubts whether other men will be able to understand him and he becomes "inclined to remain in quiet and not to preach the doctrine." However, afterwards, touched by Brahmā's repeated entreaties, he changes his mind (Cf. *Vinaya Texts*, tr. from Pāli by T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg, pt. I, Delhi, 1974, pp. 84 sq.).

II. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Some Observations on the Present and Future of Buddhist Studies*

by D. Seyfort Ruegg

At this Conference we are fortunate to be celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the International Association of Buddhist Studies. By the standards of many learned societies this is not a great age, but it is no doubt long enough for our Association to be able to look back and take stock with a sense of some achievement. It may also be an appropriate moment to attempt to look forward.

The IABS has as its goal the furthering of Buddhist studies throughout the world, and it is then fitting if we think of it as being a World Association of Buddhist Studies. By Buddhist studies the IABS understands the serious investigation, by all suitable means, of Buddhism both historically (diachronically) and descriptively (synchronically). Accordingly, drawing as it does on diverse disciplines such as those of philology, history, archaeology, architecture, epigraphy, numismatics, philosophy, cultural and social anthropology, and the histories of religion and art, our enterprise is at the same time a disciplinary and a multi-disciplinary one. Buddhism is indeed not only philosophy and/or religion, at least in the narrow senses of these terms, but also a way of living and being, a cultural and value system permitting Buddhists in vast areas of the world to construct so much of their mundane as well as spiritual lives.

The kind of serious intellectual investigation promoted by the IABS is certainly in part academic, one pursued in institutions devoted to teaching and/or research. But only in part. For in view of the prevailing patchy, and often unsatisfactory, implantation of Buddhist studies in universities and research organizations in so many parts of the world, were Buddhist studies to be confined exclusively to these institutions they could run the risk of having a very limited future. Exceptionally fortunate indeed are the places where this is not the case, and rare are the institutions where Buddhist studies have been regarded as a discipline meriting an academic chair and structure.

Equally importantly, we see today a significant and serious — if still perhaps somewhat diffuse — interest in Buddhism among the public, both the young and the less young, to which the universities find themselves poorly placed to respond. Many will perhaps agree that in order for Buddhist studies to flourish — even to survive — it will be the task of those concerned with them to seek to attract and hold the educated attention, interest and support of persons who are not full-time professional academics. An effort must be made somehow to achieve a closing of the ancient and entrenched divide between "town" and "gown." Scholars of Buddhist studies need to foster contacts with specialists from other disciplines with whom collaboration may prove fruitful both within and outside the universities: historians and archaeologists, anthropologists, medical and health specialists, psychologists, those concerned with ethics and the relation between man and his environment, and many more..

Ethics for example has become a focus of attention in many disciplines from philosophy to medicine (and including now business studies). In Buddhism non-injury (*a[vi]hiṃsā*) is of course an ancient and honoured concept, but its implications may not have always been drawn out in their fullness. The question of man in relation to nature and his environment is also an old one in Buddhism, even if looked at simply from the point of view of the division between the sentient (*sattvaloka*) and non-sentient world (*bhājanaloka*). According to a very important current of Buddhist thought, moreover, all sentient beings (*sarvasattva*) without exception, including of course animals, are considered to have the Buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*, etc.); certain schools in addition attribute this Buddha-nature also to plants, and it is then thought of as pervading in some way the whole of nature. So it will be of interest to observe how the Buddhist traditions have demarcated the areas of man and his environment differently both from each other and from many contemporary discussions on the subject which are of course influenced by quite other religio-philosophical and cultural traditions.[1]

Mention has just been made of the problems posed by the patchy implantation of Buddhist studies in universities and research institutions. It is of course true that in South Asia there exists a good deal of activity in various branches of Buddhist studies associated with established university posts, but less perhaps than in former years and less also than might be hoped for in view of the fact that Buddhism originated and took on so many of its developments in this part of the world. As for Europe, the number of university chairs in Buddhist studies can probably still all be counted on the fingers of one hand; and other full-time teaching and research posts dedicated to these studies are not numerous. In Japan, certainly, the situation is very different, so much so that it can be said that it is there that Buddhist studies have their greatest geographical density and are achieving their greatest academic intensity. In America until about a decade ago Buddhist studies suffered from a paucity of established

academic posts, but significant progress has been made since then. And it is noteworthy that this development has benefited the study of the Buddhist traditions of Southeast, East and even Central Asia as well as of South Asia. A further remarkable development in the United States in particular has been the appearance of accredited institutes and colleges of Buddhist studies which address themselves to the needs of a public that does not consist solely of younger full-time students, and which attempt also to bridge the gap between professional scholars of Buddhism and those who are not academics.

A comparison of the present situation of Buddhist studies in America, Europe and Japan is instructive and it suggests some observations. First, in Europe Buddhist studies, with only a few notable exceptions, have tended to be concerned with Indian Buddhism whereas in North America they deal at least as often with East Asian and occasionally Southeast or Central Asian Buddhism. Secondly, in continental Europe most posts in Buddhist studies are either in departments of Indian or Asiatic/Oriental studies whereas in North America — and now in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand — they are increasingly often located elsewhere, especially in departments of religion and philosophy or much more rarely in departments of history. Thirdly (and perhaps partly as a consequence of the second point), in America there may be two — in very favourable cases even more — scholars of different traditions of Buddhism working in the same academic unit, whereas in Europe it is still exceptional to have full posts in several traditions of Buddhism at a single institution. In Japan the academic organization of Buddhist studies seems to combine features of the systems characteristic of continental Europe and America, and a tendency to join both appears to be making some headway elsewhere too. The idea of locating Buddhist studies in a department of religion is of course not totally without parallel and indeed precedent in Europe, for at the École des Hautes Études in Paris Buddhist studies were already represented from the inception in 1886 of its Section des Sciences Religieuses by Sylvain Lévi. Generalizations are of course always risky, and it is often possible to point to opposite tendencies in any given area. At all events, the two models for the organization of Buddhist studies just mentioned — the one that places them in a department of Indian or Asiatic/Oriental studies and the one that locates them in departments of religion and/or philosophy or, occasionally, of history — can lend disciplinary variety to Buddhist studies.

Placing Buddhist studies in departments of religion, philosophy or history could, it is true, result in their being distanced if not totally divorced from the historical and philological disciplines — Indology, Sinology, etc., — devoted to the cultural areas in which Buddhism originated and developed. In other words, the academic study of Buddhism might find itself being organized without due regard being accorded to its historical matrix and cultural context. This potential danger has perhaps been reinforced, in America in particular, by the surprising and indeed paradoxical circumstance that, not infrequently, Buddhist studies have

been represented little or not at all where Indian studies were otherwise strong and that, conversely, Indian studies have not always been cultivated where Buddhist studies were represented. This is once more but a generalization, and there are exceptions which — since things are always changing — may become more the rule. At all events, it should be clear that Buddhist studies — however much they can benefit from close contact with the disciplines of religious studies and philosophy or of history to which they in turn have very much to contribute — must be solidly based in philology (in the comprehensive sense of this word) and cultural studies.

If in Europe the link between Buddhist studies on the one side and Indology on the other has usually been very close, one consequence has been that — given the fact that chairs of Buddhism have been so rare — very many distinguished scholars of Buddhism in Europe have actually occupied professorships of Sanskrit and Indian studies rather than of Buddhist studies. This, as already noted, can have the very important advantage of keeping the study of Buddhism firmly anchored in its historical matrix and cultural context. But such structuring of Asian studies inevitably carries the danger that the successor of a scholar of Buddhism will not be a specialist in our studies at all but in some completely different branch of Indology, Sinology, etc.

In an age of increasing specialization, moreover, it is growing ever more difficult to maintain the idea, prevalent since the foundation of Asian studies, of a chair in for example Sanskrit and Indian studies that may be filled equally by a Vedist, a classical Sanskritist or a specialist in Indian Buddhism. (The equipping of institutes and seminar libraries alone can make such shifting from one branch of Indology, Sinology, etc., to another highly problematic from a purely practical point of view.) I cannot see that sufficient recognition has been given to this problem, and to the risk it involves, in any but a very small handful of European universities. In Japan on the other hand the system adopted, in the national universities in particular, of distinct established chairs in Buddhist studies beside chairs of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy has quite successfully addressed this real problem for our discipline. How this problem of chairs and their continuity will be resolved in the North American universities still remains to be seen.

Without established and continuing structures and without strong and enduring academic traditions it is at any rate hard to see how any discipline can in the first place become established and then, once established, develop and flourish. Vigorous and sustained efforts need to be made towards consolidating the study of the different traditions of Buddhism at universities and research institutions. Outside South and Southeast Asia dedicated posts in Pāli and the Theravāda tradition of Buddhism are almost unknown. Only a very small handful of posts exist for Central Asian Buddhism, in particular for the Tibetan and Mongolian traditions. And outside Japan surprisingly few exist for such important areas as the Buddhist traditions of China and Japan. The development

of Buddhist studies has indeed often proved difficult, and one cannot altogether escape the impression that inertia, perhaps even opposition, has been greater than might legitimately have been hoped and expected. This is not the place to go into this phenomenon. But it does appear pertinent at least to allude to it if only in order to pose the question whether this situation reflects, to some degree that is difficult to ascertain, a cultural or ideological prejudice, perhaps even a more or less unconscious attitude of anti-clerical secularism or anti-monasticism. As for the study of Buddhist philosophy, it has no doubt been affected by the fact that, in recent years, the development of the human and social sciences (welcome though this was) has been accompanied by a retreat in philosophy — a subject that one would have thought to be essential to these very sciences.

A very strong plea must also be entered here for pursuing research in Buddhist studies in close collaboration with competent scholars from Buddhist countries who are well trained in their intellectual and spiritual traditions. The need for this kind of collaboration might appear altogether obvious were it not for the fact that, to the detriment of scholarship as well as of mutual understanding in these studies, it has too often been overlooked.

We have probably all come to see that the universalist scholar in Indology, Sinology, etc., is something of the past, noble though the ideal of comprehensive knowledge still remains and however successful this ideal of scholarship may have been before specialization developed to the degree we now know. The problems of the universalist scholar and the generalist are ones that may concern us within the field of Buddhist studies also. For here too specialization is inevitable, and it is growing at a rapid and daunting pace. Communication, both intellectual and organizational, among the various disciplines and trends represented within the broad purview of Buddhist studies is sometimes proving difficult. Even the question of the usefulness of holding general congresses such as the present one is being raised. A historian dealing with Buddhism might perhaps ask what he can find in a congress where much time is spent in discussing philosophy and religion; and some philosophers and religionists might ask how they can benefit from a conference where anthropology or archaeology are legitimate subjects of discussion. Nonetheless, while we acknowledge both the inevitability and the very real benefits of specialization — and therefore the usefulness of holding smaller colloquia devoted to the emerging specialisms in Buddhist studies — it seems to me that there remains a need for a comprehensive congress where the overarching concerns — theoretical and practical, disciplinary and interdisciplinary — of Buddhist studies can be addressed. This Conference may wish also to consider the question of promoting in the future specialized colloquia alongside our periodical General Conferences. If the latter were for example to be held every three or four years, smaller thematic and regional colloquia could be organized in the intervals.

I have mentioned that Buddhist studies have, traditionally, most often been placed in philologically and historically oriented departments or faculties of Asiatic/Oriental studies, and that in the nineteenth century and through several decades of the twentieth century this arrangement served them well, allowing them to make very remarkable progress. But since the 1960s in particular have we not heard much about a supposed lack of "relevance" of the philological and historical disciplines, not to speak of philosophy? And especially since the 1970s, with the publication of Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978), has not an attack been mounted on Orientalism for its supposed racial, cultural and political biases? This critic of Orientalism once took a great Sanskritist and scholar of Buddhism, Sylvain Lévi, as a target in his very sweeping campaign. And commenting on Lévi's having connected Orientalism and politics in an interview,[2] Said has written:

> "For all his expressed humanism, his admirable concern for fellow creatures, Lévi conceives the present juncture in unpleasantly constricted terms.... The Oriental is imagined to feel his world threatened by a superior civilization; yet his motives are impelled ... by rancor or jealous malice. The panacea offered for this potentially ugly turn of affairs is that the Orient should be marketed for a Western consumer, be put before him as one among numerous wares .... By a single stroke you will defuse the Orient ... and you will appease Western fears of an Oriental tidal wave. At bottom ... Lévi's principal point — and his most telling confession — is that unless something is done about the Orient, 'the Asiatic drama will approach the crisis point.'"[3]

To any one familiar with Lévi's *oeuvre*, this representation of it will appear so tangential by its focus on the manipulative and exploitative as to render his ideas and position hardly recognizable for us.

Yet the practitioners of what in academic circles is often still being called Orientalism must now, I think, be conscious — at least somewhat more so than they were in the past — of their pre-judgements (not to say prejudices) and be more critically aware of both their pre-suppositions and their methodologies. Orientalism and with it our own discipline, when not in a phase of antiquarianism and a rather unreflective positivism, seem quite often to have found themselves being buffeted between exoticism and attempts at "relevance" motivated either by sheer fashion or by considerations of trade and commerce with Asia. The dangers of fashion and radical *chic* are now being encountered in the problems arising in connection with curricular pluralism and "cultural studies" — things that could, however, be made very worthwhile provided of course that they are pursued on a solid foundation. Regrettably, far from contributing to greater scholarly and critical awareness, the fashion for so-called relevance as well as the stance of anti-Orientalism, generating heat rather than light, appear not to have made matters better.

It might be that Orientalism as represented in our institutions will soon (though for quite other reasons) be as much overtaken by developments, and hence as much a thing of the past, as the universal Indologist, Sinologist, etc. And the change in name of our great sister (or rather, in view of its age, mother) institution from Congress of Orientalists first to Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa and then to Congress of Asian and North African Studies had perhaps after all a certain justification that was not only politico-ideological but genuinely intellectual. For the IABS too such debates are probably not altogether without pertinency.

Let us now turn briefly to a couple of developments in Buddhist studies over the past fifteen years or so. Most welcome has been the resurgence in Pāli Buddhist studies after a period of eclipse relative to their former state. This is especially gratifying since, after all, the Pāli canon (together with its exegetical traditions elaborated in the Theravāda school) represents one of the main pillars in the great hall of Buddhist studies as well as of Buddhism as a living tradition. Another specialism, Tibetan Buddhist studies, has also made a good deal of progress in this period despite the considerable obstacles in the way of the establishment of Tibetology as an academic discipline. The development of this specialism too is gratifying because of the great significance of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions when considering the religious, philosophical and cultural role of Buddhism as a way of thought and practice that has remained very much alive until the present day.

Occasionally these two traditions within Buddhism have, however, been seen as antithetical in their religious and philosophical positions, and sometimes (e.g., in contemporary Nepal, and elsewhere too) they are even regarded as rivals in competition with each other. It is of course true that the Buddhist traditions of Tibet and Mongolia are deeply imbued by the Mahāyāna whilst the Pāli canon and the Theravāda school are normally to be classified as Śrāvakayānist.[4] But what has sometimes been lost sight of is the fact that Tibetan-Mongolian Buddhism is by no means *exclusively* Mahāyānist or Vajrayānist. In fact, like any Buddhist order of monks or Saṃgha, the monastic order in Tibet and Mongolia is founded on the Vinaya, in this case the one belonging to the Mūlasarvāstivādins which is one of the great Śrāvakayānist Schools and (in so far as they are Vinaya-Schools) Orders (*nikāya*). Furthermore, in Tibetan philosophical thought Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, representing as it does the doctrines of the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika schools of the Śrāvakayāna, is one of the fundamental points of reference and, accordingly, one of the prescribed textbooks in Tibetan seminaries. In the Tibetan and Mongolian canons, the bKa' 'gyur, there are moreover to be found a number of texts parallel to Pāli Suttantas, and some that were apparently translated from Pāli;[5] and the Buddhist tradition in Tibet has accorded due attention to these *sūtras* belonging to what is in Buddhist historiography and doxography frequently described as

the Buddha's first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma. It is therefore fitting that the Pali Text Society is at present supporting a research project to edit and translate several *sūtras* from the Tibetan bKa' 'gyur and to compare them with parallels extant in Pāli as well as in Sanskrit.

In Buddhist studies uncertainty and perplexity have been caused by the question as to how best and most precisely to use the terms Śrāvakayāna, Hīnayāna and Theravāda, which are sometimes being employed as if they were practically coterminous equivalents to which Mahāyāna (or Bodhisattvayāna) is antithetically (or even hostilely) opposed.

Strictly speaking — and very notably in the usage of the Tibetan doxographers and descriptions of the Path — the Śrāvakayāna (Tib. *ñan thos kyi theg pa*, the "Vehicle of the Auditor") is indeed contrasted with the Mahāyāna (Tib. *theg pa chen po*, the "Great Vehicle"), but these two Vehicles are nonetheless very frequently regarded as being complementary rather than as absolutely exclusive of (or hostilely opposed to) each other. For Tibetan Buddhist tradition in fact acknowledges both to be authentically founded in the Word of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*) and to correspond to the Buddha's successive turnings of the Wheel of the Dharma. This view of the matter may be adopted in the perspective of that version of the *triyāna*-theory in which the three Vehicles of the Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha and Bodhisattva, classified in an ascending hierarchical order, are acknowledged as separate and *ultimately* distinct *yānas* bringing different types of individuals — divided according to their spiritual categories or "genes" (*gotra*) — to their respective and different final destinations, namely the three distinct kinds of Awakening (*bodhi*) recognized in this theory. Or on the contrary, and *a fortiori*, this view of the Vehicles may be taken in the perspective of the theory of the One Vehicle (*ekayāna*) according to which the three *yānas* are accepted not as *ultimately* separate Vehicles leading to *ultimately* distinct kinds of liberation, but as all finally converging in the single and unique Vehicle (the *ekayāna* = *buddhayāna*) whereby all sentient beings will reach Buddhahood. In this second perspective, then, the theory of three Vehicles and of separate spiritual *gotras* has only provisional validity. For in this case the distinct *yānas* of the Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha and Bodhisattva serve to convey persons of the corresponding *gotras* to genuine yet provisional spiritual destinations without, however, leading to radically distinct spiritual goals; and they finally converge together in the *ekayāna* or *buddhayāna* in conformity with the theory of the *tathāgatagarbha* or Buddha-nature according to which all sentient beings ultimately achieve buddhahood.

Now the fact that the Śrāvakayāna, the first of the turnings of the Wheel of the Dharma, has been considered by Mahāyānist hermeneuticians to be not of definitive and certain meaning (*nītārtha* = *nges don*) but rather of philosophically and soteriologically provisional meaning, and thus to require further interpretation in another sense (*neyārtha* = *drang don*), was not simply a crude

attempt by Mahāyānists to denigrate non-Mahāyānist texts and doctrines. In fact, Mahāyānist hermeneutics considers a large body of its own Mahāyāna scriptures — either those belonging to the second or to the third turning of the Wheel of the Dharma — to be *neyārtha* too.

On the other hand, the Hīnayāna (Tib. *theg dman*, also *theg chung*, the "Small Vehicle" or "Lesser Vehicle") — a term that embraces both the Śrāvakayāna and the Pratyekabuddhayāna — is antithetically opposed to the Bodhisattvayāna (Tib. *byang sems kyi theg pa*) inasmuch as it is a Vehicle that does not include the Bodhisattva's Path but constitutes a Path leading rather to Arhatship conceived of as different from Buddhahood. Where Hīnayāna has been employed as a historical designation either for pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism or for Buddhism that is not specifically Mahāyānist, but without any specific reference being actually intended to the Path (*mārga*) of the Small Vehicle of the Arhat in contradistinction to the Path of the Bodhisattva, the term Śrāvakayāna can usefully be substituted both in the interests of the terminological and conceptual clarity required in scholarly work and in order to avoid the use of a possibly disparaging expression. Alongside features that are strictly speaking characteristically Hīnayānist — that is, that are specific to the path of an Arhat in contradistinction to that of a Bodhisattva — the Śrāvakayāna also comprises elements that are so to say neutral — i.e., largely mainstream and non-specific to any single Buddhist *yāna* — and (in some of its forms) even elements that point in the direction of what is known as the Mahāyāna.

As for the term Theravāda, literally "Doctrine of the Elders," linguistically it is of course simply the Pāli word that corresponds to Skt. Sthaviravāda, the name given to that great trunk of Buddhism opposed to the Mahāsāṃghika at the time of a disagreement in early Indian Buddhism. Sthaviravāda is thus a comprehensive term that covers several of the traditional Schools/Orders or Nikāyas (e.g., the Sarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptaka, etc.,) and may accordingly cover a wider area than the Pāli term Theravāda. But since Sthaviravāda does not embrace all the Nikāyas, this term cannot properly be used as an equivalent of what has been termed "Nikāya Buddhism." Furthermore, it has to be borne in mind that in the course of its long history the Theravāda too has not been altogether unfamiliar with the Bodhisattva-ideal;[6] this School indeed passed through a number of the developments that its sister-schools in India knew. Moreover, to take for scholarly purposes the name Theravāda as a designation for "early" or "original" Buddhism (i.e., the teaching of the historical Buddha)[7] in contrast to later developments — that is, in effect to identify Theravāda and Buddhavacana[8] — is, historically speaking, a very wide (and eventually tendentious) use of the word.[9] Nor can Theravāda designate the whole of so-called "Nikāya Buddhism" any more than can its Sanskrit counterpart Sthaviravāda. In sum, the term Theravāda is in fact required by the historian of Buddhism as a technical name to designate one of the many schools deriving from early Buddhism, namely the venerable tradition of the Theras that traces its descent

through Aśoka's son, the Elder Mahinda who established it in the middle of the third century BCE in Sri Lanka whence it spread very extensively in Southeast Asia. Today Theravāda is usually understood by historians of Buddhism as designating specifically the tradition connected with the Mahāvihāra in Sri Lanka.[10] On the contrary, when reference is being made to the above-mentioned old division of Nikāya Buddhism which is opposed to the Mahāsāṃghika, and not specifically to the Buddhist tradition of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, the historian has available the Sanskrit term Sthaviravāda which, as just mentioned, is used more comprehensively than Pāli Theravāda and is therefore appropriate to designate the broader group of Schools/Orders in question.

Consequently, to regard the names Śrāvakayāna, Hīnayāna, Sthaviravāda and Theravāda as coterminous equivalents (except only to the extent that the name Hīnayāna might be understood as a more or less disparaging one) despite the fact that they enter into distinct combinations and into quite different pairs of terms and concepts, and then to make them *en bloc* the radical antithesis of Mahāyāna, can only render the terminology unserviceable for tracing the complex historical developments in Buddhism and for describing its no less complex spiritual paths.

If only the Pāli and the Tibetan traditions of Buddhism have been dwelt on here, this is certainly not because I consider them to be somehow more important than others, but rather in order to attempt to show by means of examples how two Buddhist traditions that may perhaps appear to us as in some sense "antipodal"[11] in relation to each other are, nevertheless, not heterogeneous and totally irreconcilable in the broad and rich frame of Buddhist theory and practice. My observations relate at the same time to several of the gaps in our discipline to which attention was usefully called by G. M. Nagao in his presidential address to the first Conference of our Association in 1978.[12] Much very valuable work has of course also been carried out over the past decade and a half in the Buddhist traditions transmitted in Sanskrit (of which in fact the Buddhism of Tibet is in large part a prolongation), and in those of East and Southeast Asia. Let me also recall here the emphasis Nagao laid on the need to bring to bear in Buddhist studies what he termed the analytical and synthetic approaches — i.e., the method whereby pieces of information accumulated from various sources are established as reliable data and the method by which these established data are then made to yield a humanistically meaningful historical and descriptive account of Buddhist thought, practice and culture — and reiterate the plea for a solid philological (by which I do not of course mean only linguistic) foundation for studies in the history, religion, philosophy and iconology of Buddhism.

At the start of this address I said that in Buddhist studies we can look back over the fifteen years that have passed since the founding of the IABS with a

sense of achievement. Some of this achievement has been mirrored in and contributed to by our Journal. The *JIABS* has in fact a very essential function to fulfil both as an organ of the Association, recording its conferences and other activities, and as an outlet for articles, book-reviews and reports on symposia and the like which reflect the many facets of Buddhist studies world-wide. Some articles may also seek to respond to the needs of our readership which is varied, and presumably not composed exclusively of professional academics in Buddhist studies. And precisely because few can aspire to being experts in each and every aspect of Buddhist studies, we probably require more reports and bibliographical surveys that keep specialists in one branch abreast of developments in others. The philologist and the historian of religion and philosophy will for example require information about important recent developments in history, archaeology, art history, etc., as they bear on Buddhist studies. Above all, our organization will wish to promote this scholarly exchange on a world-wide basis.

The present and future of Buddhist studies are of course to be seen not only as the product of what happens in universities and learned societies but in correlation, at least in part, with the world situation, and also, it has to be added, with the trials and troubles through which so many Buddhist peoples and their Saṃghas have passed. In that great arc of Buddhist civilization stretching from Tibet and Sri Lanka in the west to Korea and Japan in the east, few indeed have been the Buddhist peoples that have been spared prolonged and terrible calamities during this century. The events to which I am referring have inevitably had a deep impact on Buddhism — both on the Saṃgha and also on the Dharma-as-teaching (*deśanādharma*) in its temporal situation — in the areas concerned and thus, if only indirectly, on Buddhist studies. For it can hardly be supposed that there exists no correlation between the welfare and well-being —the *hita-sukha* — of the Buddhist peoples and the flourishing of Dharma and Saṃgha on the one side and the condition of Buddhist studies on the other side. Let us hope that the well-being that some peoples having a Buddhist heritage now enjoy may prove to be also a harbinger of amelioration elsewhere.

NOTES

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1. The role of environmentalism in Buddhism has become highly topical. For the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's espousal of this cause for Tibet and the Himalayan region and for his proposal of a Zone of Ahiṃsā, see his *Freedom in Exile* (London, 1990), pp. 274-5: "The Tibetan plateau would be transformed into the world's largest natural park or biosphere. Strict laws would be enforced to protect wildlife and plant life; the exploitation of natural resources would be carefully regulated so as not to damage relevant ecosystems; and a policy of sustainable development would be adopted in populated areas."

Concerning nature and environmentalism in Buddhism, see recently L. Schmithausen, "Buddhismus und Natur," in: R. Panikkar and W. Strolz, *Die Verantwortung des Menschen für eine bewohnbare Welt in Christentum. Hinduismus und Buddhismus* (Freiburg-Basel-Wien, 1985), pp. 100-33; K. Inada, "Environmental Problematics in the Buddhist Context," *Philosophy East and West* 37 (1987), pp. 135-49; and the discussions connected with the 1990 Tsurumi/Osaka International Garden and Greenery Exhibition reported in *Revista de Estudios budistas* 1 (1991). For the question of ecology, etc., in Buddhism, reference can be made to the bibliography and brief discussion in I. Harris, "How Environmentalist is Buddhism?," *Religion* 21 (1991), pp. 101-14.

2. Une heure avec M. Sylvain Lévi, Indianiste, Professeur au Collège de France, par Frédéric Lefèvre, in *Nouvelles Littéraires*, 14 March 1925, reprinted in *Mémorial Sylvain Lévi* (Paris, 1937), pp. 118-25.

3. E. Said, *Orientalism* (Penguin ed., London, 1985), pp. 249-50.

4. The terms Śrāvakayāna and Śrāvakāyānist are here being used advisedly instead of Hīnayāna and Hīnayānist. See below.

5. Nos. 747-759 in the Beijing edition, translated by Ānandaśrī and Nyi ma rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po of Thar pa gling (Thar pa Lo tsā ba, a teacher of Bu ston Rin chen grub, 1290-1364).

6. Even though in Sri Lanka the Bodhisattva-concept seems to have been associated especially closely with kingship, concerning the *bodhisatta mahāsatta* as a spiritual type — as distinct from *bodhisatta* used as an appellative to designate Gotama Śākyamuni prior to his attainment of buddhahood and including his earlier existences — see Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimgga* iii. 128 (ed. Kosambi, p. 94) and ix.124 (p. 270). And on the *pāramitāsīla*, the highest form of *sīla* exercised for the purpose of the liberation of all beings (*sabbasattavimokkha*), see *Visuddhimagga* i.33 (p. 12). — On *sammāsam-bodhi* as distinct from *sāvakabodhi* and *paccēka(sam)bodhi*, see (in addition to the *Khuddakapāṭha*, p. 7, on *sāvakapārami*, *paccekabodhi* and *buddhabhūmi*) the Lokuttarasampattiniddesa (Chap. viii) of the *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra*, p. 340 ff. (which mentions *sāvakabuddhas* and *paccekasambuddhas*). Cf. W. Rahula, "L' idéal du Bodhisattva dans le Theravāda et le Mahāyāna," *Journal Asiatique* 1971, p. 68 f.

7. Under the entry *theravāda*, the Pali Text Society's Dictionary (London, 1925) has given both "the doctrine of the Theras" and "the original Buddhist doctrine."

8. See R. C. Childers, *A Dictionary of the Pali Language* (London, 1875), s.v. *vādo*: "*Theravádo* is a term applied to the orthodox doctrines or word of Buddha as settled at the first Saṅgīti." Childers quotes the *Dīpavaṃsa* (iv. 6, 13).

9. It is to be noted that as used alongside *ñāṇavāda* in the Pāli canon (Majjhima-nikāya i, pp. 164-165, in connexion with Āḷāra Kalāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta) *theravāda* has in fact a quite different meaning from the one it acquired in the *Dīpavaṃsa* and comparable later texts. In other words, in the Pāli canon *theravāda* has neither the meaning of (*buddha*)*sāsana* it has acquired in the historical literature of Sri Lanka, nor the meaning

of original Buddhism given it by some modern writers.

Needless to say, what is being stated here is definitely not meant to deny the fact that the *buddhavacana* as recorded in the Pāli canon of the Theravādins has become an integral part of the tradition of this school, which is of course based on it. But by the same token the *buddhavacana* as recorded in the canons of the Sarvāstivādins, Dharmaguptakas, etc., has become an integral part of these Nikāya-traditions, which are similarly based on these canons. Thus, much of the contents as such of the Theravādin canon are no more (and of course no less) Theravāda in the historical sense of this term than the contents of, e.g., the Sarvāstivādin canon are Sarvāstivāda in the historical sense. But if it were the case that the philosophical and religious contents of the canon of the Theravāda school are Theravāda, by the same token the contents of the canons of the Sarvāstivāda school, etc., will be Sarvāstivāda, etc.; and as a result the same (or very similar) Buddha-word would be termed sometimes Theravāda and sometimes Sarvāstivāda, etc., for no other reason than that it happens to be found in the canon of this or that Nikāya even when it is common to other canonical traditions.

Nevertheless, the expressions "Theravādin canon," "Sarvāstivādin canon," etc., may serve perfectly legitimately to designate a particular canon as *redacted* and *transmitted* by the Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, etc., schools. These canons may then be specifically Theravādin, Sarvāstivādin, etc., in respect to their linguistic expression, structure, etc., but not in their religious and philosophical contents which may in fact be largely mainstream and thus not Nikāya-specific.

10. Historically, Sinhalese Buddhism embraced other traditions too, e.g., that of the Abhayagiri Vihāra. And it has to be recognized that in a later mainland Buddhist source such as Vinītadeva's **Samayabhedoparacanacakra-Nikāyabhedopadarśana-saṃgraha*, the school of the *gnas brtan pa* (= *sthavira*) is identified only by its subdivisions of Jetavanīya, Abhayagirivāsin and Mahāvihāravāsin without any continental representative being mentioned. Hence, in effect, it is represented as being the Tāmraparṇīya, or Sri Lanka, school. This appears to indicate that the only, or at least the main, representatives of the Sthaviras (as a school) known to the *later* Indian and to the Tibetan historiographical and doxographical traditions were indeed to be found in Sri Lanka at their time.

On the Mahāyāna in Sri Lanka, see especially S. Paranavitana, "Mahāyānism in Ceylon," *Ceylon Journal of Science* (Section G: Archaeology, Ethnology, etc.), ii (1928-33), pp. 35-71; H. Saddhātissa (ed.), *Upāsakajanālaṅkāra* (London, 1965), Introduction, pp. 104-11; Nandasena Mudiyanse, *Mahayana Monuments in Ceylon* (Colombo, 1967); H. Bechert, "Mahāyāna literature in Sri Lanka: the early phase," in: L. Lancaster (ed.), *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems* (Studies in Honor of E. Conze, Berkeley, 1977), pp. 361-8; and G. Schopen, "The text on the 'Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya,'" *JIABS* 5/1 (1982), pp. 100-08 Cf. also J. C. Holt, *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka* (New York, 1991).

On the question of "Mahāyāna Theravāda" in Hsüan-tsang's writings, see recently A. Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism* (Hawaii, 1990), p. 257. E. Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien* (Louvain, 1958), pp. 596-601, refers, perhaps more appropriately, to Mahāyānasthaviras. They are located by Hsüan-tsang not only in Sri Lanka but also on the mainland at Bodh Gayā and Bharukaccha, and in Kalinga and Surāṣṭra; it is not certain what language(s) they used. Hsüan-tsang also refers to monks who studied both the Great and the Little Vehicles; cf. E. Lamotte, "Sur la formation du Mahāyāna," *Asiatica* (Festschrift F. Weller, Leipzig, 1954), p. 395, and *Histoire*, p. 601.

11. In using the expression "antipodal," I am not thinking only of the difference in the geographical distribution of the Vehicles in South and North Asia but also of a certain polarity between them, poles being of course not only opposed but also in complementary tension.

12. See *JIABS* 1/2 (1979), pp. 79-85.

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THE CHEMICAL COMMUNICATORS

Candace Pert

CANDACE PERT, Ph.D., is Visiting Professor at the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience, Rutgers University, and a consultant in Peptide Research in Rockville, Maryland. She was formerly Chief of the Section on Brain Biochemistry of the Clinical Neuroscience Branch at the National Institute of Mental Health. She discovered the opiate receptor and many other peptide receptors in the brain and in the body, which led to an understanding of the chemicals that travel between the mind and the body.

MOYERS: As a research scientist, how did you get interested in the connection of mind and body?

PERT: Well, I started out being a very basic molecular biologist working on the receptors of psychoactive drugs, particularly the receptors for the opiates—you know, opium, heroin, codeine, Demerol. There's a chemical in your brain, almost like a keyhole, that receives all of these opiates, and that's called the "opiate receptor." As a student, I developed ways to measure these receptors, which had been hypothetical up until that time. That led to the discovery that the brain makes its own morphine, and that emotional states are created by the release of the chemicals called endorphins, which is shorthand for "endogenous morphines."

In the beginning, like many other neuroscientists I was secretly interested in consciousness, and thought that by studying the brain I would learn about the mind and consciousness. And so for most of my early research I concentrated from the neck up. But the astounding revelation is that these endorphins and other chemicals like them are found not just in the brain, but in the immune system, the endocrine system, and throughout the body. These molecules are involved in a psychosomatic communication network.

MOYERS: "Psychosomatic communication network"?

PERT: Information is flowing. These molecules are being released from one place, they're diffusing all over the body, and they're tickling the receptors that are on the surface of every cell in your body.

MOYERS: Are the receptors like satellite dishes?

PERT: Very much so. That's a good image of it if you can imagine millions of satellite dishes all over one cell. The cells are being told whether they should divide or not divide, whether they should make more of this protein or that protein, whether they should turn on this gene or that gene. Everything in your body is being run by these messenger molecules, many of which are peptides. A peptide is made up of amino acids, which are the building blocks of proteins. There are about twenty-three different amino acids. Peptides are amino acids strung together, very much like pearls strung along in a necklace. If you can imagine twenty-three different-colored pearls, you can see how you could have information capable of making infinite numbers of peptides. Some peptide strings are quite short. For example, the peptide enkephalin, which is the brain's own morphine, is only five amino acids long. Others, like insulin, are a couple of hundred amino acids long.

MOYERS: Where are they?

PERT: They're everywhere and that's what really shook everybody up. After the brain's own morphine turned out to be a peptide, many scientists began searching to see which peptides they had known in other contexts could be found in the brain. The answer was, just about all of them. And then in the eighties we began to find peptides in the immune system and everywhere else.

MOYERS: Why are they important?

PERT: They seem to be extremely important because they appear to mediate intercellular communication throughout the brain and body.

MOYERS: How are they related to emotions?

PERT: We have come to theorize that these neuropeptides and their receptors are the biochemical correlates of emotions.

the emotions, and consciousness to the realm of the church. It's incredible how far Western science has come with that reductionist paradigm. But, unfortunately, more and more things don't quite fit into that paradigm. What's happening now may have to do with the integration of mind and matter.

MOYERS: We journalists are often guilty of missing the answer by posing the wrong question. I asked, "Is the mind talking to the body?" and you caught me on that. So if you were posing the question appropriately from your research, how would you phrase it?

PERT: I would ask, "How are mind and matter related to each other?" But remember, I'm a scientist, not a philosopher, and I get a little frightened if I'm pushed too far out of my realm. I think, though, that we have sufficient scientific evidence to hypothesize that these information molecules, these peptides and receptors, are the biochemicals of emotions. They are found in the parts of the brain that mediate emotion. They control the opening and closing of the blood vessels in your face, for example. They allow the systems of the body to talk to each other.

MOYERS: They're agents of information?

PERT: Exactly. They carry messages within the brain, and from the brain to the body, or from the body to the body, or from the body to the brain. The old barriers between brain and body are breaking down. The way scientists like to work is to have the immunology department over here and the neuroscience department over there. People from these departments don't talk to each other that much unless they're married to each other. But in real life the brain and the immune system use so many of the same molecules to communicate with each other that we're beginning to see that perhaps the brain is not simply "up here," connected by nerves to the rest of the body. It's a much more dynamic process. I once went to a meeting in Rome called "Opiate Endorphins in the Periphery." The "periphery"—that's anything except the head. But the old emphasis on the brain is breaking down now that we're discovering, for example, that cells of the immune system are constantly filtering through the brain and can actually lodge there. We're discovering things that are shocking even me!

When people discovered that there were endorphins in the brain that caused euphoria and pain relief, everybody could handle that. But when they discovered they were in your immune system, too, it just didn't fit, so it was denied for years. The original scientists had to repeat their studies many, many times to be believed. It was just very upsetting to our paradigm to find mood-altering chemicals in the immune system—and not just the chemicals, but the receptors as well.

MOYERS: These messenger molecules you're talking about are also called neuropeptides, are they not?

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PERT: Right. I call them neuropeptides because I'm neurocentric. I started as a neuroscientist. But in a way that's a silly word, too, because there's more endorphin in your testes than there is in some parts of your brain. One way to think of neuropeptides is that they direct energy. You can't do everything at every moment. Sometimes the energy needs to go toward digesting food. At other times more blood needs to flow through your spleen. If you've been challenged with a bug that can cause a fever, then you've got to put more energy into your spleen and less energy into digesting your food. Something needs to tell you, "You'd better not eat right now."

MOYERS: Why do you call these neuropeptides "biochemical units of emotion"?

PERT: Well, it took us fifteen years of research before we dared to call them that. But we know that during different emotional states, these neuropeptides are released. It looks like emotion in the broadest sense. Let me give you an example. A peptide called angiotensin is connected with thirst. You can take an animal that's sated with water, but if you inject it with angiotensin, it will just drink and drink. The peptide binding to that receptor makes the animal's mind feel thirst. That same peptide binding to the lung makes the lung conserve water. That same peptide binding to an identical molecular entity in the kidney makes that kidney conserve water. The molecular entity is the same. It's like a brick that can be used in the basement of a house or in the attic of a house—it serves different functions in different locations, but it's the same brick. And overall, there's an integration process affecting the behavior at the whole-animal level so that everything in the animal's mind and body is saying, "I want water, I want to save water, I don't want any water to be lost."

MOYERS: I can see that, but what makes me say "I'm sad" or "I'm happy"?

PERT: It may just be some peptides in your intestine. In other words, it goes both ways. If you accept the premise that the mind is not just in the brain but that the mind is part of a communication network throughout the brain and body, then you can start to see how physiology can affect mental functioning on a moment-to-moment, hour-by-hour, day-to-day basis, much more than we give it credit for.

MOYERS: So instead of saying the mind is talking to the body, you would say "I'm talking to myself," because these neuropeptides are regulating the emotions that I "feel."

PERT: Yes, through receptors in the parts of the brain that we've long known are associated with the experience of emotions. Years ago it was shown that when surgeons electrically stimulated the brains of people undergoing epilepsy surgery, they would laugh or cry or be in ecstasy—in other words, the patients would emote just from electrical stimulation of certain parts of the brain. We now know that those parts of the brain are loaded with virtually all of these peptide-information substances and their receptors.

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MOYERS: And so they send these messages like little canoes down into the body, where they find waiting ports of call.

PERT: Well, it gets weirder than that. The message doesn't literally have to go from the brain into the body. It can happen almost spontaneously.

MOYERS: But what's happening?

PERT: We don't know, but I feel that the person who will figure this out is going to be a physicist, because clearly there's another form of energy that we have not yet understood. For example, there's a form of energy that appears to leave the body when the body dies. If we call that another energy that just hasn't been discovered yet, it sounds much less frightening to me than "spirit." Remember, I'm a scientist, and in the Western tradition I don't use the word "spirit." "Soul" is a four-letter word in our tradition. The deal was struck with Descartes. We don't invoke that stuff. And yet too many phenomena can't be explained by thinking of the body in a totally reductionistic fashion.

MOYERS: And by "reductionistic," you mean—

PERT: That it's just chemical and electrical gradients, and that one day everything will be explained without invoking some other energy.

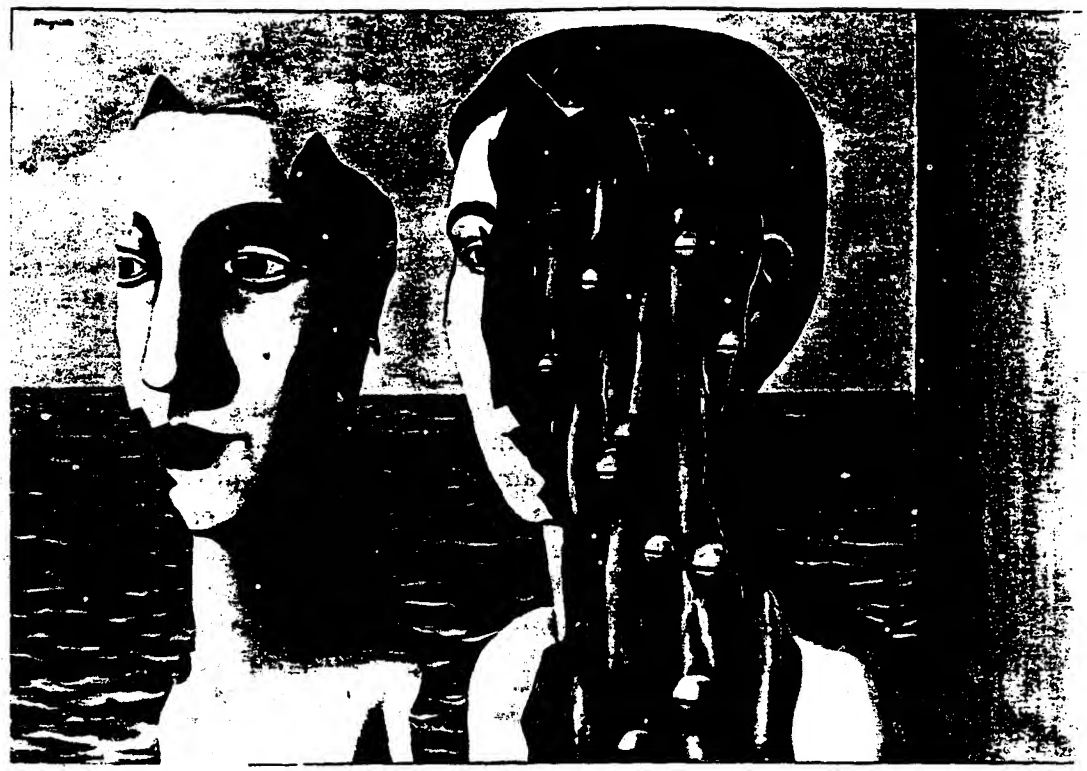
MOYERS: But what you're describing with neuropeptides seems to me essentially a chemical reaction. You call these neuropeptides chemical messengers. As they go from one place in the body to another, the body creates a physical response.

PERT: You're right—and that's what makes it all so fascinating, that emotions are in two realms. They can be in the physical realm, where we're talking about molecules whose molecular weight I can tell you, and whose sequences I can write as formulas. And there's another realm that we experience that's not under the purview of science. There are aspects of mind that have qualities that seem to be outside of matter. Let me give you an example. People with multiple personalities sometimes have extremely clear physical symptoms that vary with each personality. One personality can be allergic to cats while another is not. One personality can be diabetic and another not.

MOYERS: But the multiple personality exists in the same body. The physical matter has not changed from personality to personality.

PERT: But it does. You can measure it. You can show that one personality is making as much insulin as it needs, and the next one, who shows up half an hour later, can't make insulin.

MOYERS: So in the person with multiple personalities, the brain is releasing different messengers.



René Magritte, *Le Double Secret*, 1927

PERT: That's one possibility. We just haven't done the research to know that yet.

MOYERS: On the basis of the research you have done, what do you think is going on when I get a "gut reaction"?

PERT: Well, your mind is in every cell of your body. We know that because so many cells of the body contain these molecules that we've been mapping.

MOYERS: So this gut reaction is a mental act?

PERT: Yes, it's a mental act—the wisdom of the body. We don't have to sit here and say, "Okay, stomach, it's time for you to move that food along. Okay, spleen, we need a few more white cells for these viruses." All that is going on beautifully on a subconscious level that we don't need to deal with. Someone stepped on your toe, and before you even thought, "Someone stepped on my toe," you felt anger. Your body was alerting you. These things have survival value.

MOYERS: Just the other day I stepped out into the street, and a cab came down almost on top of me. I immediately stepped back. I didn't tell myself to step back, my body just took me back. After the taxi had passed, I got angry at the driver, and I wanted to curse. All the same thing?

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PERT: Sure, that's the wisdom of the body. It's not as if your head is thinking up things and telling your body what to do. Your body is knowing what to do.

MOYERS: The danger was instant and then the anger at the driver was instant. And all of this is physical, chemical?

PERT: Of course. And it's also emotional and in this other mental realm, too.

MOYERS: So you're saying that my emotions are the same as my physical reactions, and that they occur when a particular molecule hits a particular receptor?

PERT: I believe that's true, yes.

MOYERS: You've seen the molecule hit a receptor?

PERT: Absolutely. I've measured it.

MOYERS: But have you seen the emotion it carries with it?

PERT: I've seen animals behave as if they had that emotion. Scientists who study rat and monkey behavior have seen animals behaving and have measured increases and decreases in the amounts of the neuropeptides being released.

MOYERS: You know from scientific research that certain reactions occur when the neuropeptide hits the receptor. But there isn't any way to identify the emotion that emerges from that, is there?

PERT: We're really in the very early stages of being able to figure out which peptide mediates which emotion or whether combinations of peptides are involved. We have a few that we know pretty well because we have psychoactive drugs that give a certain effect. For example, we know that cocaine is a euphoriant, and we know what receptor system it interacts with in the brain.

MOYERS: When you snort cocaine, you immediately get a rush, or a "high," as it's called.

PERT: Right. And the reason you get this high is that the receptors for taking up and inactivating one of the messenger molecules gets blocked by cocaine. It binds to that receptor and interferes with the normal destruction of the chemical that causes euphoria.

MOYERS: But euphoria is a physical response to a drug. Grief is something else, is it not?

PERT: You bet, but I'm sure there are chemicals that mediate grief. If there were a plant that made us feel grief, nobody would have cultured it, and so nobody would know about it today. It might be growing down there in the Amazon right now, but who would know?

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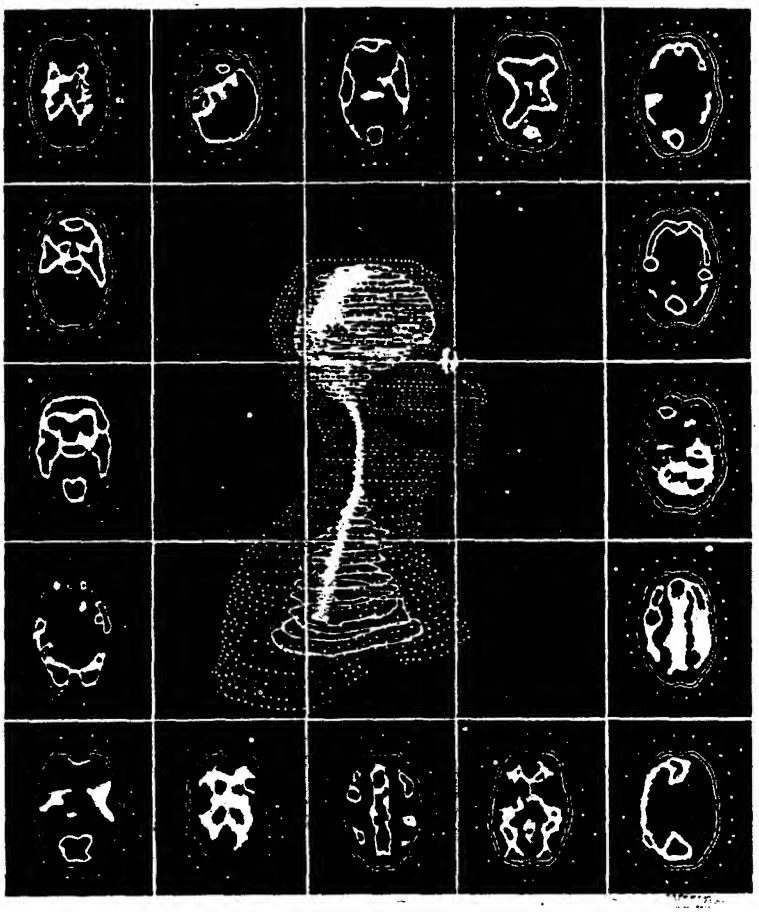


Joshua Simons, *16 States*, 1987

MOYERS: But you haven't identified the grief peptide, have you?

PERT: I haven't, but maybe one of the peptidologists has, and we might know it under another name. We might not realize yet that it causes grief because if we dropped that molecule into a rat's brain, we couldn't tell if the animal was feeling grief.

MOYERS: The existence of peptides is not conjecture, you've seen that.

PERT: Me and ten thousand other scientists.

MOYERS: But isn't it conjecture that from the reaction of peptide to receptor comes an emotion?

PERT: I think we're on firmer ground with some peptides than we are with others. There's a lot of work to be done, and the killer experiment that will link mind to matter, and peptides and receptors to emotion, has not yet been done. But we do know that not all the emotions are up in your head. The chemicals that mediate

emotion and the receptors for those chemicals are found in almost every cell in the body. In fact, even one-celled animals have these peptides.

MOYERS: But simple organisms have no critical faculty. My big toe may feel something, but it can't tell whether it's feeling fear or anger or happiness or sadness. My mind has to come into play.

PERT: To say, "I am feeling this," and to analyze that, your brain is of course coming into play. But there are many emotional messages that don't percolate up to your level of knowing them. Even so, they are used to run everything in your body.

MOYERS: Wait a minute. You're saying that my emotions are stored in my body?

PERT: Absolutely. You didn't realize that?

MOYERS: No, I didn't realize it. I'm not even sure what I mean by that. What's down there?

PERT: Peptides, receptors, cells. The receptors are dynamic. They're wiggling, vibrating energy molecules that are not only changing their shape from millisecond to millisecond, but actually changing what they're coupled to. One moment they're coupled up to one protein in the membrane, and the next moment they can couple up to another. It's a very dynamic, fluid system.

MOYERS: And every time they couple, every time they connect, every time they respond one to another, chemical messages are being exchanged. And my body responds differently according to what cell is getting what chemical.

PERT: Absolutely. You got it.

MOYERS: Then are you saying that we're just a circuit of chemicals?

PERT: Well, that gets to be a philosophical question. One way to phrase it would be, can we account for all human phenomena in terms of chemicals? I personally think there are many phenomena that we can't explain without going into energy. As a scientist, I believe that we're going to understand everything one day, but that this understanding will require bringing in a realm we don't understand at all yet. We're going to have to bring in that extra-energy realm, the realm of spirit and soul that Descartes kicked out of Western scientific thought.

MOYERS: But I can't think of information being elsewhere other than in the cells of my body. That's all I can experience.

PERT: Yes, I used to say that neuropeptides and the receptors are the physical substrate of emotions. Then someone yelled at me and said, "What do you mean, 'physical substrate'? That makes it sound as if they're the foundation of emotions. How do you know the foundation isn't in another energy realm? Why don't you say

neuropeptides are the biochemical correlate?" It's tricky. I don't have the right language because I'm not quite sure. I can say that what it looks like to me is that the currency with which mind and matter interconvert might be emotions. Emotions might actually be the link between mind and body—although I hate the word "link," because it's mechanical and Newtonian, and it suggests fences.

MOYERS: But we do know that body events occur when my cells receive these messages from the neuropeptides. So are you saying that it's the body's reaction that creates the emotions?

PERT: The body's and brain's reactions, yes. The body's everyday physiological functions, both normal and pathological, are creating emotions.

MOYERS: So you are not just speaking metaphorically when you say that the mind is in the body?

PERT: Not at all. I think it's physical, and I think it's real. There are hundreds of scientists who've found these molecules in the various parts of the body.

MOYERS: I'll take your word for it that we can see the molecules in the laboratory, but can we see the emotions carried by those molecules?

PERT: Well, that's where we have the problem. Those pesky emotions. They have a nonphysical as well as a physical reality, so they're hard to study in a laboratory. Hypnotherapy, for example, shows that people can re-experience strong emotional states from their past and then experience physical changes in their bodies, such as pain going away.

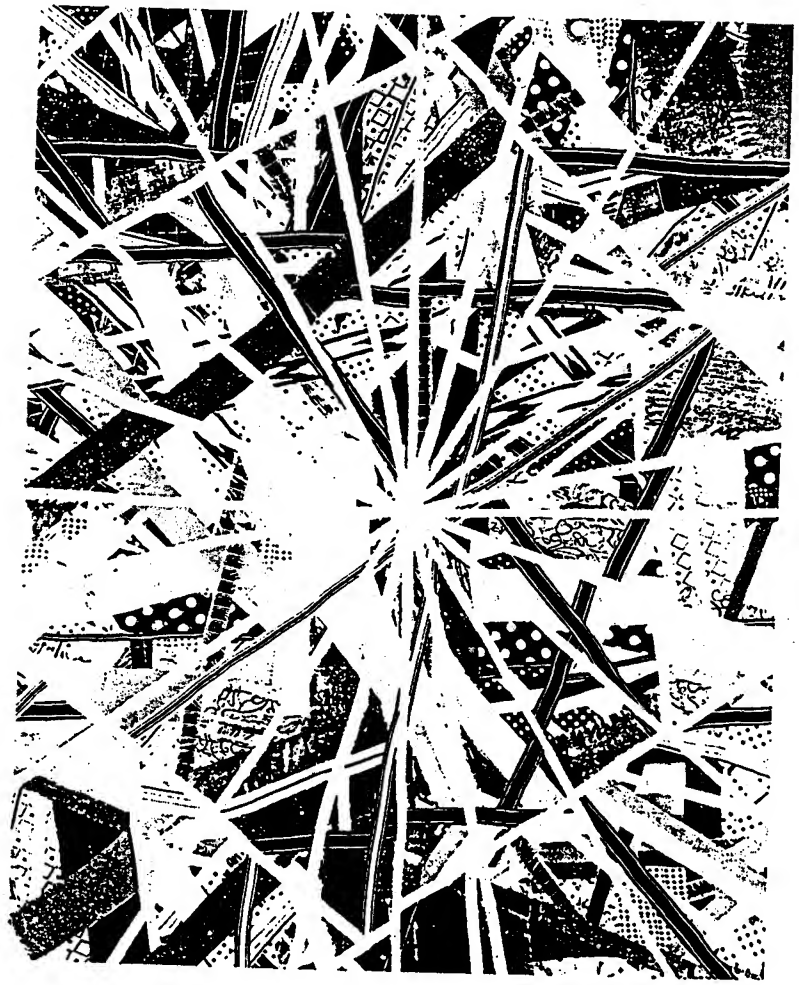
MOYERS: So like the sperm meeting the egg, you can see the chemical interaction take place, but you can't really see the life in that matter.

PERT: That's right. We can measure the chemical reaction that gives rise to an emotion, but we can't look under a microscope and say, "That's grief." We can say that a particular peptide, for example, can create euphoria not only in humans, but also even in rats and simpler animals. In other words, we can measure behavior. In fact, using the laboratory approach, all we can do is measure behavior. My work has been interesting because the receptor is the interface where behavior meets biochemistry.

MOYERS: What does that have to do with emotion?

PERT: Well, why else do you think you behave? Everything you do is run by your emotions.

MOYERS: And your emotions are in that reaction in the receptor when the molecule arrives with its information?



Lucas Samaras,
Reconstruction #28, 1977

PERT: Yes. Remember, though, there are millions of these interactions going on. Like a house made of bricks, your body is made of millions of cells, every one of which is covered with these little satellite dishes.

MOYERS: I understand that in terms of my behavior. For example, if I step into the street, and then I see a car coming, instantly there are messages about danger, and I step back. The brain is talking to me through this reaction in the receptor.

PERT: You're still thinking it's your brain, but it's the wisdom of the body. Intelligence is in every cell of your body. The mind is not confined to the space above the neck. The mind is throughout the brain and body.

MOYERS: So the mind is more than the brain?

PERT: Definitely.

MOYERS: The brain is just three pounds of meat?

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PERT: No, the brain is extremely important. It is our window to the outside of the body, through the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth.

MOYERS: Then what is the mind?

PERT: What is the mind? Gosh, how frightening! I'm a basic scientist, and I'm having to answer, "What is the mind?" The mind is some kind of enlivening energy in the information realm throughout the brain and body that enables the cells to talk to each other, and the outside to talk to the whole organism.

MOYERS: And what does all of this have to do with my health?

PERT: Everything. Look what's happening to me—I'm becoming a health nut because the implications of this work makes you think more and more about the nature of health and disease. The word "health" itself is so interesting because it comes from a root that means "whole." Part of being a healthy person is being well integrated and at peace, with all of the systems acting together.

MOYERS: Have you changed your notion of health because of your research into peptides and molecules?

PERT: I have changed so much from my research that it's frightening. I've been transformed by my research. For example, when I had my first child, I didn't know that the body makes its own pain relief, its own morphines. When I had my second child, I had learned about these endorphins, and so I thought it was logical that they would play a role in childbirth. Why would they be there? It must be a natural analgesic system. So I went natural with the second child because I had more faith and confidence in my own ability to release the drugs that I needed.

MOYERS: But what about our emotions? Can our moods and attitudes physically affect our organs and our tissues?

PERT: I believe they can, because moods and attitudes that come from the realm of the mind transform themselves into the physical realm through the emotions. You know about voodoo death—in some cultures, if you tell people there's a death hex on them, they'll die.

MOYERS: But what about healing? How does your research help us understand the process of healing?

PERT: Recent discoveries suggest that the surface of the monocyte, which is one of the prime cells in the immune system, is covered with receptors for peptides, these biochemicals of emotion I've been talking about. If you cut your finger, in seconds these monocytes come out of your bone marrow, go right to the site of the injury, and begin to remanufacture and restructure the body fabric.

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MOYERS: And that happens instantly?

PERT: It happens all the time. It's happening now. We've probably had five little things happen in the last ten minutes, while we were talking, where monocytes went to the rescue.

MOYERS: I see how these monocytes can help to heal a wound, but I have a hard time seeing how that is connected to the emotions. As a Westerner, I think of illness as being caused by a bacteria or a virus. If I pick up a bacteria, I'm likely to get sick.

PERT: Well, of course your immune system responds—but, just to take one example, viruses use these same receptors to enter into a cell, and depending on how much of the natural juice, or the natural peptide for that receptor is around, the virus will have an easier or a harder time getting into the cell. So our emotional state will affect whether we'll get sick from the same loading dose of a virus. You know the data about how people have more heart attacks on Monday mornings, how death peaks in Christians the day after Christmas, and in Chinese people the day after Chinese New Year. I never get a cold when I'm going skiing. Another example: the AIDS virus uses a receptor that is normally used by a neuropeptide. So whether an AIDS virus will be able to enter a cell or not depends on how much of this natural peptide is around, which, according to this theory, would be a function of what state of emotional expression the organism is in. Emotional fluctuations and emotional status directly influence the probability that the organism will get sick or be well.

MOYERS: That's a kind of conventional wisdom, isn't it? We've known that for a long time.

PERT: Of course it is.

MOYERS: But will we ever be able to put our minds and our bodies in a certain state so that we affect our immune system positively?

PERT: Theoretically, that should be possible, and some people believe they're finding ways to do that. I certainly don't have the answers, though.

Gaston Chaissac, *Totem*, 1959

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MOYERS: You're modest in not claiming more than your scientific work allows you to claim, but a lot of people are speculating that the next step will be to try to create the emotion that will help direct our health.

PERT: It's clear to me that emotions must play a key role, and that repressing emotions can only be causative of disease. A common ingredient in the healing practices of native cultures is catharsis, complete release of emotion. Positive thinking is interesting, but if it denies the truth, I can't believe that would be anything except bad.

MOYERS: So a part of health is letting these true emotions of grief and sorrow and anger and fear work their way through to catharsis. Is there anything in your research that suggests that repressing emotions is bad for us?

PERT: Not in my research, because that is on the molecular level. But there is a growing body of literature, much of it European, that suggests that emotional history is extremely important in things like the incidence of cancer. For example, it appears that suppression of grief, and suppression of anger, in particular, is associated with an increased incidence of breast cancer in women. This research is controversial, and there are always methodological issues to address—but it's very interesting.

MOYERS: You've said that we're on the verge of a scientific revolution. What's the nature of that revolution?

PERT: We're well into the revolution, which has to do with incorporating the mind and emotions back into science. The implications for medical practice, of course, are enormous.

MOYERS: So if medicine begins to incorporate mind and emotion, the field might be retrieved from the hucksters, and the charlatans, and the pop psychologists.

PERT: Yes, but just because the hucksters are out there doesn't mean that we should ignore the possibility that there are some very real and valid aspects of what they're doing. We're too presold on the high-tech, highly unemotional approach. Dean Ornish's work has shown that a combination of stress-reduction exercises, meditation, group therapy, and a vegetarian diet can actually reverse damage to the heart muscle. That's very surprising to doctors.

MOYERS: What your research suggests is a physical, biological ground for the effect of emotions on health, right?

PERT: Exactly. The knowledge of these molecules and where they are can provide a possible rationale for the mind and emotions affecting health. Our experiments won't prove that they do, but the rationale is there. Of course, I have to be careful, because I can't be responsible for somebody setting up shop somewhere and saying,

"I'm going to tease your peptides and heal you." But if you want my opinion, I think the pendulum has swung much too far in the other direction. We're sold on high-tech, incredibly expensive medicine that's bankrupting the country. Why not try a little prophylaxis? Let's begin to appreciate simple, less expensive therapies that deal with releasing emotions, and let's get some sound scientific studies to see what works better. For example, the Spiegel study shows that women with breast cancer who met with other women in a support group lived twice as long as women who had the same chemotherapy but didn't get together to talk. I think in Western medicine we've come to the point where we're ignoring what's obvious. I think we need to go back a little.

MOYERS: But researchers and doctors do want to know if there's some physiological basis for this, and that's what your research is trying to suggest. Is your work finding acceptance among your more traditionally minded colleagues?

PERT: They don't disagree with my basic work on any level. Of course, the theoretical ramblings I'm allowing myself here are not really in the scientific literature, so nobody is likely to get me on them.

MOYERS: What would you like me, a layman, to know about healing and the mind?

PERT: Norman Cousins said something to the effect that having the confidence to believe that almost anything is possible can translate into being able to heal. If telling people about my work can provide them with a scientific rationale that gives them greater confidence in themselves, and in their own mind, throughout their body, to heal themselves, then I feel that I'm making a contribution.

MOYERS: But isn't there a danger in that? Now, if I have a cold, I assume it's because a virus entered my body, and so I don't feel guilty. But if I believe that thinking positively can keep me well, then I blame myself for my illness.

PERT: That's part of the tension around this paradigm shift. If it's true that emotions are critical in health and disease, then people shouldn't feel guilt, they should just start to take in this new information. People need to open up and learn not to feel guilty but to learn new ways of being and thinking, new therapies, and new strategies.

MOYERS: What is the research of the nineties? Where is it taking us?

PERT: I think we're going to see more applications to health and disease. Knowing that viruses use the same receptors that we're talking about opens up new forms of specific kinds of antiviral therapies where peptide drugs from the outside can block the ability of viruses to enter cells, and can slow the spread of infection. We're

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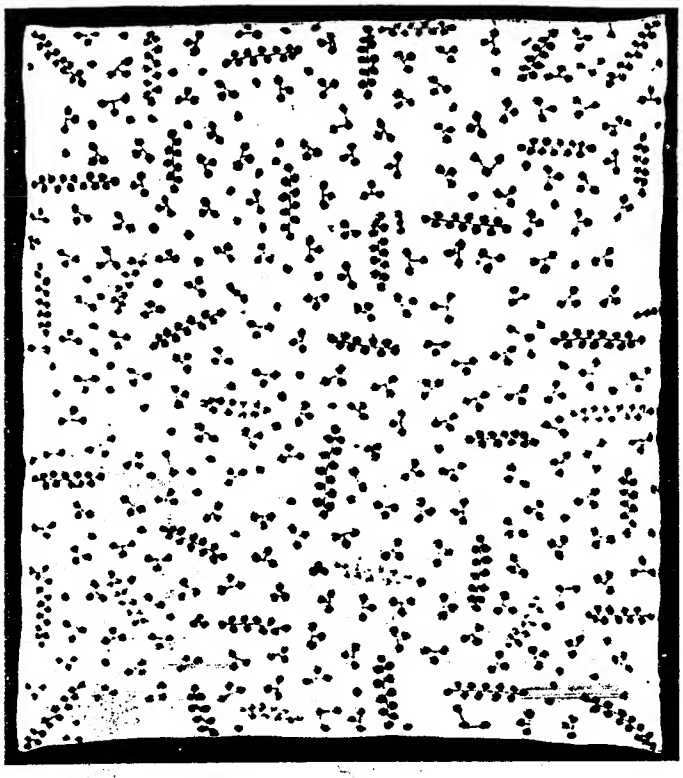

Woman's headcloth,
Guatemala, 1910

going to start using all this theoretical background to come up with new drugs. Parallel to that will be more responsibility for your health using the natural drugs in your own brain. Was it Norman Cousins who said that the biggest and best pharmacopeia is your own brain? It's got every drug in there that you could ever need.

MOYERS: So perhaps in that ancient wisdom there was some real truth—"Physician, heal thyself." Do you really think that we have within us a large capacity for self-healing through our emotions?

PERT: Absolutely.

MOYERS: And you say that as a scientist?

PERT: No, I say that as a human being who's traveling through life and has had some interesting experiences with it.

MOYERS: But where does this trail lead us in regard to emotions and health?

PERT: It leads us to think that the chemicals that are running our body and our brain are the same chemicals that are involved in emotion. And that says to me that we'd better seriously entertain theories about the role of emotions and emotional suppression in disease, and that we'd better pay more attention to emotions with respect to health.

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HOW TO STAND A REASONABLE CHANCE OF GETTING GOOD MARKS IN THE ESSAYS (AND EXAMS) YOU DO ON THE SORT OF THINGS I TEACH

Some nonexhaustive jottings based on recent reading of essays/essay drafts

Paul Williams

(Version 1: January 1999. This list will be updated as and when I think of further points to make)

In addition to all the normal points which should be considered when writing essays, please note the following considerations. However, you should also remember that taking notice of these points in writing your essay (as well as other more general matters of correct essay technique) will not *guarantee* that you get a good mark. What it should entail is that you do not get a bad mark because of not embracing these considerations. Whether, having undertaken these, you do get a good mark or not will depend upon how well you have done it. The eventual mark for your essay will be the result of an overall consideration of your work (call it 'holistic' if you like!), by more than one experienced marker. Marking is not simply a matter of ticking-off points which aggregate to, say, a First-class mark. There is no *specific* answer *in detail* to the question 'What must I do to get a First?' (cf. 'What must I do to be saved?'), although there is a specific answer to the question 'What, if I *fail* to do it, will make it highly unlikely that I will get a First?'.

1. Languages

1.1 If you have studied, or are studying, an Asian language—even if at a very elementary level—you should try and show that you are using your knowledge of the language (if only a little bit). It will impress, and may well gain additional marks.

1.2 You should use diacritics (the dots and dashes on e.g. Sanskrit words) if at all possible, and you should try very hard to get them right. Failure to do so looks careless. (In exams, I do not expect such precision). Check very carefully. This is particularly important when you are at Third-year level or taking a postgraduate degree. Also, in an essay on Buddhism reflect a little before you write about the appropriateness of using Pāli terms, or Sanskrit terms, or both. Normally one should be consistent. Consider the implications of using e.g. Pāli terms in a context when discussion *non*-Mahāyāna Buddhism (which includes particularly the Sarvāstivāda/Vaibhāṣika tradition which normally used Sanskrit), let alone when discussing Mahāyāna Buddhism.

2. Other points

2.1 Do not forget that I am usually open to you writing on a different topic, and formulating your own question, providing you clear it with me first.

2.2 If you decide that the topic which you are writing about covers so many aspects that you can treat all of them only very superficially, it is permissible (as far as I am concerned) to state so in your opening paragraph, indicate briefly what all these aspects are, and then choose a few central aspects to treat fully. You should state that is what you are doing, and show that this is not simply a matter of omission, or simplification. You need to show that you do indeed know what those other aspects are.

2.3 All titles, and foreign words which have not become Anglicised should be in italics.

2.4 Make sure you write in full sentences. Give references for your observations. The marker should always be able to tell where you are getting *all* your information from.

2.5 Be careful with words like 'they', 'he' etc. Make sure it is clear in context who or what these words refer to (cf. 'Archibald went to see Harold, and he was ill.')

2.6 It is often a good idea to begin your essay by stating among other things what topics you will discuss, and what things you intend to show (to argue for) in the essay. And in your conclusion you can state that you consider that you have sufficiently discussed and demonstrated those things. However, be very careful that what you say you intend to show (discuss etc.), you do indeed show, and what you say you have shown is what you have indeed shown, and is also what you said you intended to show. You should always read through your essay carefully before submitting it, and if possible you could try asking another student (perhaps one who is unfamiliar with the subject) to read through the essay to see if what you are saying makes sense.

2.7 You should assume that your reader is intelligent, and knows something about the subject appropriate to the level at which you are writing (in other words, you would not normally need to start by explaining e.g. where India is, or that Buddhism is a religion). However you should not assume that your reader knows all about what you are writing about. In particular, you should not assume that your reader has attended the class you have been taking, and you should not write in a way which can only be understood by someone who has attended that class or, can only be understood by that particular marker. You need to spell things, out, explain connections, outline each stage of the argument, etc.

2.8 The logic of your argument, particularly when writing about philosophical ideas, is important (especially as far as I am concerned). Your argument should follow from acceptable premisses. You should show how it follows, indicating each stage in the argument. Problems here are often reflected in my comments like 'Clarify' or 'Expand', or 'Develop'. You should be particularly sensitive to the clarity and clarification of the terms and concepts which you employ. This may be seen particularly in comments like 'Clarify' or 'Ambiguous' etc., or where I substitute alternative expressions. For an excellent manual on how to assess and write philosophical essays you could well read/work through A.P. Martinich, *Philosophical Writing* (in the Library). A lot of what is in this book is directly relevant to writing essays in our field.

2.9 In explaining the meaning of concepts, technical terms etc. you must be specific, not vague, and the meaning must be such as would be accepted by one who adheres to or uses as part of their regular discourse those concepts, technical terms etc.

2.10 If you cite or mention someone else's views, make it clear that you are citing the views of someone else. Also, do not leave them hanging in the air. Explain why they are worth citing or, if you do, why you find them convincing. And make sure that you express their views as fully and accurately as is fair and is needed for your purposes. If you disagree with their views do not simply state that you disagree with them, or carry on as if they have not made their point. Argue against them, at least enough to show your disagreement is founded on reason.

2.11 If your outline of a religious position is such that the position seems bizarre, or it would be difficult to understand even with a considerable effort of imagination how anyone would ever have come to such a position, or take it seriously, the fault could well be yours. Your explanation may rely on sources which are unhelpful (try to use sources from the tradition itself, or from those intimately familiar with the tradition), and particularly your exposition may be excessively simplistic. In general in Religious Studies unless you have evidence otherwise assume that the views you are expounding are the views of those who are intelligent, sincere, and have grounds for their views which intelligent sincere people consider convincing.

2.12 Crucially, for a good mark you must 1) expound accurately and in sufficient detail for the purposes of the question, thus showing that you understand the concepts and ideas involved; and 2) engage with the material in a way which is *constructive, creative, and critical*, thus showing that you can operate in a dynamic way with the concepts and ideas involved. It is unlikely that you will be able to do either of these by relying on just one or two books, and you will not be able to do 2) by simply reproducing mechanically what the books say, even if it is in your own words. The sources that you read need to be assimilated, filtered through your own understanding, and expressed through critical engagement. If your essay really contains 1) and 2) then you are well on your way to getting a good mark. Failure in 2) will lead to a mediocre mark. Failure in 1) will probably lead to not such a good mark, although intelligent engagement could in theory offset that. Failure in both 1) and 2) will lead to a poor mark, if not outright failure.

2.13 One good way of engaging with the material is to probe in an intelligent manner the concepts and the argument of the material you are using, followed by clarification and superior argument. This could certainly include probing the concepts, implications and ambiguities of the question itself. I often set deliberately questions which require this sort of probing.

2.14 If you have a good point, a point which is original for which you have argued the case carefully, make sure you get full value out of it. Make it stand-out; refer to it again ('As I argued above . . .). Don't let it be all but lost in the rest of what you have written.

2.15 I commonly find that when students are following books closely—even though they are 'putting it in their own words'—their style, vocabulary etc. change when they switch from using one book as a source for what they are saying to another book as a source. Sometimes when their source uses a term which is not one of standard modern English, they repeat the term without comment or explanation, as if it is a term of their *own* everyday written language. This is strange. It suggests that they are not really thinking about what they are writing, but are *almost* copying out what the book is saying. It is not *really* being filtered through their own understanding; they are not *really* engaging with the material, or considering what is the best way to express their understanding. Remember, the markers are likely to know any source you use extremely well, even down to the style and idiosyncrasies of the author. Also you should be particularly careful when using (as you ought to) a number of sources. What they say may not be compatible with each other, or may form part of overall arguments which are not compatible. I sometimes find that a student will say one thing on page *X*, taken from a particular source, and on the following page state something which either directly contradicts or is incompatible with *X*, taken from another source, without realising this incompatibility.

2.16 Use *specific* references to primary sources (e.g. classical works written by Buddhists themselves) liberally to support what you are saying. Avoid saying simply e.g. 'According to Chinese sources . . . '. *Which* sources? Give, mention, or cite an example.

2.17 When expounding the views of others, make it clear that is what you are doing, and indicate where your exposition of their views begins, and where it ends. The reader should not be left wondering whether what he or she is reading is your view, or the view of someone else.

2.18 Do not simply state what secondary sources (writings on e.g. Buddhist texts) *say* is said in certain primary sources (texts by e.g. Buddhists themselves). If at all possible, go to the primary source (in translation, where it has been translated) itself. Even if you have not studied the relevant language, it is often good to look at different translations of the same passage. These can alert you to problems in the text and translation. Discussion of these differences in your essay could well contribute to an excellent essay. *Ideally* one should never rely on just one translation. Do not write as if the primary source material was all written in English, when you know perfectly well it was not. Also, be careful in using quotations that the quotations do indeed serve the purposes for which they are being used. Sometimes it looks as if a quotation is being employed because the student felt he or she needed a break, or had to get that particular quotation in somewhere, even if it does not relate to the context or argument.

2.19 In using any source, *including primary sources*, remember always (if only in your own mind, before you start writing) to interrogate your source. Who is writing it? For whom? In what context? How reliable is the source? Is/was the author in a position to know? Do they have a particular purpose for writing, a particular view of which they wish to convince others (an 'axe to grind'), and how might this have affected the writing? Is the text intended as e.g. descriptive narrative, or is it some form of rhetoric, persuasion, exhortation? Etc.

2.20 If you have time, follow up cross references. If a book you read on e.g. Buddhist metaphysics mentions on a particular point a relevant comparison with Jaina metaphysics, then don't simply repeat that in your essay. If you want to mention it, show you have also checked in another reliable book on Jaina metaphysics.

2.21 Be particularly careful of generalisations. 'Buddhists hold that . . .', 'In Vedic times they thought that . . .', 'Koreans rejected . . . ', 'Then came the Upaniṣadic Age' (on the 1st of January? What do we mean by an 'Age'?). Generalisations invite disagreement, and they are easy to refute. One counter example refutes a universal claim. They often involve the application of very vague concepts. Generalisation are thus usually uninformative, or unnecessary (cf. 'The most widely-held view of Buddhists, at least in India, is . . . ' etc.). Being careful about such generalisations would save the markers a great deal of ink. Another thing to be extremely careful about are concepts like 'the traditional view', the 'orthodox view' etc. Have you made it quite clear how these expressions are being used? Traditional for whom? And avoid vagueness. Be specific; give examples. All these points—and other points—apply even if some of the books you use commit these mistakes. That is one way of judging the quality of the book.

2.22 Be extremely sensitive to using value-judgements. They can be used, but you should be very careful, and make it clear this is what you are doing ('*X* saw this as appalling, and I would be inclined to agree. However . . .'). Value-judgements when extended to whole paragraphs become polemic. And do not presuppose that your reader holds a particular religious viewpoint, or a common viewpoint with you, the writer. In academic writing your own feelings *per se* are not very important. What are important are *arguments* leading to *conclusions*, and our task as scholars is largely the *generation and assessment of arguments as arguments for conclusions*.

2.23 Remember in writing an essay for Unit *X* things which have been said and discussed in the classes for that Unit, and also in other Units. I often find that students fail to remember in writing an essay for Unit *X* (say, Third-year Tibetan Religions), things which we discussed in Unit *Y* (say, Second-year Mahāyāna Buddhism). And even more often—and perhaps more culpable—I find that students write their essays out of books and completely forget the discussions we had in class. Thus, for example, if a book uses the expression 'Hīnayāna' as an equivalent of 'Theravāda' the essay does so as well, without any indication that this may be problematic, even though I may have devoted in class half an hour to problems involved in this usage. It is simply untrue that whatever is said in books is likely to be better (truer) than what is said orally.

3. Finally

Finally, the key to academic success is enthusiasm. If you are enthusiastic about what you are studying and what you plan to write about you will want to do what is necessary to produce a good essay, and your enthusiasm will show. The markers will enjoy reading what you have written, and when the markers are happy one can expect it to be reflected in the marks. Conversely, lack of enthusiasm—approaching the essay as a task to be completed as soon as possible before doing things which you would really much rather be doing—also shows very clearly. It usually leads to lack of engagement with the material, and it makes markers miserable.

VIPASSANA AND THE CULTURING OF EMOTIONS

Prof. P.L Dhar

The quality of life that a man leads is primarily governed by the quality of his emotions. One who is full of negative emotions like anger, hatred, fear, lust, avarice etc. always leads a miserable life, and one who is full of positive emotions like friendliness, compassion, love, cheerfulness etc. leads a happy life; and this holds good irrespective of one's wealth, intelligence and social position. The ever-growing conflict and violence in society today, which makes reading of the morning newspaper such a depressing experience, is a consequence of negative emotions running amok. At the root of each despicable act, whether carried out by an isolated individual or collectively by a mob, lies emotional ineptitude - the inability to manage one's feelings. Culturing of the emotions is thus an urgent priority and concerted efforts are therefore being made both to understand the origin of these emotions and the methods to culture them. And this search for methods for the refinement of emotions has naturally led to increasing interest in various ancient oriental practices which are better known by the generic term 'meditation'. In this paper an attempt has been made to present one such meditation practice - Vipassana or Insight meditation - in the perspective of modern scientific studies on emotion.

Scientific Studies on Emotion

Plutchik and Kellerman3 classify the studies on emotion in three domains, viz. the evolutionary, the psycho-physiological and the dynamic or psychoanalytic. Fundamental to the evolutionary view, originally propounded by Charles Darwin, is the postulate that "emotions serve an adaptive role in helping organisms deal with key survival issues posed by the environment"4. Thus occurrence of any event, such as a threat by an enemy or loss of a parent, is interpreted based on past memories. This cognition is followed by introspective feelings such as fear or sadness that we usually think of as emotions. (See Fig. 1)

The sequence of events related to the development of an emotion[4]

Stimulus/ event	Cognition	Feeling	Behaviour	Effect
Threat by enemy	Danger	Fear	Run	Protection
Loss of parent	Isolation	Sadness	Cry for help	Assistance

Figure 1

As shown in Fig.1, this feeling usually results in an appropriate behaviour which is conducive to "survival". The word emotion refers to this complex chain of reactions which has adaptive value for the individual in dealing with various types of crisis.

The psycho-physiological view of emotions is based on the extensive studies done, especially in the last few decades, on the relationship between emotion and various physiological changes occurring within the organism, the most dramatic of these being the glimpse into the role of complex neural circuitry made possible by modern brain-imaging technologies. Though attempts to identify the precise biological signatures of each emotion have not been fully successful, it is evident that there is a strong relationship between the subjective experience of emotion and changes in the autonomic, neuroendocrine and neurological processes. Further, the physiological changes triggered by these play a key role in providing feedback for amplification and response to emotions6.

The third major approach towards the study of emotions is based on the Freudian theory of mental functioning and its later derivatives. It posits that the emotions, which are a part of our biological heritage, are essentially combinations of certain ideas

(thoughts, memories and wishes) intimately associated with the sensations of pleasure and displeasure7. The ideas and/or the sensations may be wholly or partly unconscious. These undergo transformation depending on the extent of gratification or its opposite in the life of an individual and the level of psychic maturity and functioning (in psychoanalytic terms: ego development and ego functioning).

These scientific studies have naturally led to a number of approaches at culturing emotions and treating emotional disorders: counselling, chemical (and even surgical) interventions in neural systems and psychotherapy. In contrast, the oriental tradition has preserved a number of techniques to bring about a refinement of emotions by directly controlling and purifying the mind - Vipassana meditation being probably the most powerful of these. It is interesting to understand the 'mechanics' of Vipassana in the light of such scientific studies; but first a brief description of the practice of Vipassana.

Vipassana Meditation

Vipassana, as the very name suggests (the Pāli word *passanā* means to see, to observe), involves a careful observation of all that is happening in the body-mind complex, so that we become aware of the misconceptions about it that are the root cause of all suffering. Careful observation demands alertness and therefore the Buddha, who propounded this technique over 2,500 years ago, called it *Satipaṭṭhāna* -the establishing of mindfulness. The *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the discourse expounding the complete details of the practice, describes four foundations of mindfulness, viz. carefully observing the body, the sensations, the mind and the mental contents. It is claimed to be "..the only way...for the purification of beings, for going beyond sorrow and lamentation, for the extinguishing of suffering..." 8 The technique of Vipassana meditation being taught by Mr S.N. Goenka through the medium of 10-day residential courses is based on this discourse. A very brief description of this training follows.

At the outset, one must undertake to observe certain fundamental moral principles during the course. The first part of the training itself involves focussing attention around the nostrils and observing by direct experience the natural inflow and outflow of the breath. Step by step, the area of observation is narrowed down so that the concentration is progressively increased and one is able to observe subtler realities which manifest within that area. e.g. the touch of the breath, any sensations felt. This paves the way for the second, and the most important part of the training, viz. *Vedanānupassanā* - non-reactive observation of the sensations occurring throughout the body. Since, as discovered by the Buddha, "whatever arises in the mind is accompanied by sensations"9, this observation of sensations provides a means for understanding the true nature of the entire body-mind complex.

With systematic practice one learns through experience that the root cause of emotional ineptitude (and consequent suffering) is our inability to come to terms with the all too obvious fact of its impermanence - *anicca*. And, with the proper practice of Vipassana, i.e. repeated observation of the evanescent somatic sensations and the accompanying thoughts and emotional upsurges- ranging from rage to ecstasy - with a non-reactive impersonal attitude, the instinctive resistance slowly crumbles. One gradually becomes established in this great transforming insight of *anicca*. The entire body-mind phenomenon, which is innately impermanent, can surely not be a source of permanent satisfaction; nor can one have any mastery over it- for it would change at its own sweet will, without my control, without me! A steady practice of Vipassana thus slowly leads to other insights into the true nature of our existence - unsatisfactoriness or *dukkha*, and insubstantiality or *anatta*. Quite naturally, these three insights bring about a deep inner transformation. When everything is 'seen' as transient, sharing, and not greed and avarice, makes sense: for 'things' would slip away anyway. Suffering becomes a common bond which ties us to all in friendliness and compassion. And with no false images to defend, anger, hatred and ill-will just lose their relevance.

Vipassana and the Science of Emotions

Let us now understand, in the light of modern scientific studies, how this practice of Vipassana enables one to achieve the emotional refinement referred

to above. It is interesting to note that a modern variant of the psychoanalytic view explicitly recognizes that emotions are "..complex mental phenomena that include (a) sensations of pleasure and displeasure, or a mixture of the two, and (b) thoughts, memories, and wishes.... either the idea(s) or the pleasant/unpleasant sensation(s), or both may be wholly or partly unconscious."10 This is in consonance with the central role assigned to sensations in Vipassana meditation. The fundamental insight of the Buddha: "Whatever arises in the mind is accompanied by sensations", in fact, holds the key to integration of all the three modern views on emotion. Thus, Vipassana accepts the role of cognition (evaluation) in the development of emotions as depicted in Fig 1, but with this important additional link between behaviour and cognition, viz. sensations. If a person reacts to the sensations blindly (i.e. instinctively - with craving if these are pleasant, and with aversion, if these are unpleasant), his desires intensify, the emotions run wild and overwhelm reason. Unwholesome acts follow. He suffers himself and inflicts suffering on others. The Buddha calls it ignorance about the true nature of the body-mind complex (Fig. 2). On the other hand, a good meditator, knowing the impermanent nature of sensations, remains equanimous and does not react, thus entrenching this insight into the deeper recesses of the mind. His emotions remain under control and he can now act wisely, maintaining his own happiness and bringing happiness to others.

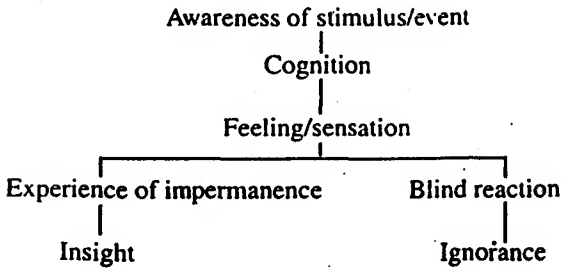

Figure 2

Interaction of beings with surroundings as explained by the Buddha

The importance of sensations in the development of emotions is also recognised by the psycho-physiological school. Thus, for example, consider the physiological events which are now known to occur in human beings in response to a strong emotion like fear or rage. As described by Gray11, the emergency reaction is due to the sympathetic nervous system acting in conjunction with hormones - adrenaline and - secreted by the endocrine glands (adrenal medulla). Its function is to mobilize the body's resources for a swift action that may be needed. There is an increase in the rate and strength of the heart beat, allowing oxygen to be pumped round more rapidly ; contraction of the spleen, releasing stored red blood cells to carry this oxygen ; release of stored sugar from the liver for the use of muscles; redistribution of the blood supply from the skin and viscera to the muscles and brain; deepening of respiration and dilation of the bronchi, to take in more oxygen; dilation of the pupils, perhaps to increase visual efficiency; an increase in the blood's ability to seal wounds by coagulating; and a rise in the supply of special blood cells known as 'lymphocytes', whose function is to help repair damage to the tissues.

All these changes, which take place in a matter of seconds or minutes, clearly cause changes in the sensations experienced all over the body. Now, depending on how one responds to these, the emotions would get further amplified or calmed down; for example, a sudden increase of heart beat or deepening of respiration can further induce a variety of emotions like fear, anxiety or anger unless one remains unperturbed knowing these as transitory, in which case the original emotion itself would be soothed (Fig.2). It is interesting to note that the Buddha uses the term *"āsavakkhayā"* (which literally means extinction of flow of 'moral intoxicants')12 to denote the state of perfection ,indicating clearly that as long as impure emotions arise these *āsavas* continue to increase. In view of this psycho-physiological connection, the hormones and other biochemicals secreted when emotions flare up could be equated with the *āsavas* referred to by the Buddha.

Concluding Remarks

As the importance of culturing emotions is being realized by society, numerous approaches have been evolved to institute this process as early in the

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life of an individual as possible. Psychologists now emphasize the need for the emotional education of children. Goleman 13 gives details of some attempts done in various schools in the USA in this direction: and the key element in all these attempts is to raise self-awareness about the emotions through various innovative techniques. As Goleman also points out, the mere process of self-awareness has a salutary effect on the emotions, something like the impact of an observer at the quantum level in physics, altering what is being observed14 . Vipassana, which is basically a technique of cultivating mindfulness at a very deep level, could clearly be of great help. It has the additional advantage, over the usual intellectual approaches, that the emotions which are simmering beneath the level of awareness, can be handled effectively through non-reactive observation of the accompanying sensations, even before these gain enough momentum to explode into awareness. Reacting to these sensations blindly the unconscious mind would have continued to intensify the negative emotions, in spite of all intellectual persuasion. By the equanimous observation of these sensations, the unconscious mind gets illuminated with the understanding of impermanence, thus pacifying the emotions at their very root.

[1]Plutchik, R and H.Kellerman (Eds) "Emotion-Theory,Research and Experience" ,Vol.1, Academic Press, 1980.

[2]Plutchik,R and H.Kellerman(Eds), op cit, p8.

[3]ibid, p11

[4]Tomkins S.S "Affect as amplification:Some modifications in theory" in Plutchik ,R and H.Kellerman (Eds),op cit,Chapter 6.

[5]Brenner,C "A Psychoanalytic theory of affects" ,in Plutchik,R and H.Kellerman(Eds.), op cit.Chapter 13.

[6]Mahasatipattana Sutta , Vipassana Research Institute,Igatpuri(Maharashtra),1994, p3.

[7]Anguttara Nikaya, VIII.ix.3(83), Malaka Sutta

[8]Breneer,C "A Psychoanalytic Theory of Affects", in Plutchik,R and H.Kellerman. op cit ,p343.

[9]Gray,J.A. "The Psychology of Fear and Stress",(Second Edition),Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, p55.

[10]The Dhammapada, Verse 253,Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies,Sarnath,Varanasi,1990.

[11]Goleman,D op cit., Chapter 16.

[12]Goleman, D, op cit, p xiii.

Sukha āye nāce nahiṃ
Dukha āye nahiṃ roya
Donoṃ meṃ samatā rahe
Dharamavanta hai soya.

Not dancing when pleasure comes,
not wailing when in pain.
Keeping equilibrium with both-
this is living the Dhamma.

—*Sayagyi S.N. Goenka*

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"Signless" Meditations in Pāli Buddhism*

by Peter Harvey

The *animitta* or "signless," is a relatively unexplored region of Buddhist doctrine;[1] unlike, for example, the system of *jhānas*, it seems to be in some need of clarification and systematisation. This is suggested by the great variety of states said to be "*animitta*" in the Pāli material, in which there is reference to *animitta-samādhi* (or *ceto-samādhi*),[2] *ceto-vimutti*,[3] *vimokkha*,[4] *vimokkha-mukha*,[5] *vihāra*,[6] *samāpatti*,[7] *vihāra-samāpatti*,[8] *phassa*[9] and *dhātu*.[10] This variety also applies to the closely related *suññatā* (void) and *appaṇihita* (desireless) states that, with the *animitta*, play an important role in the path to nibbāna.

This paper aims to differentiate the variety of *animitta* states, and to gain some understanding of their nature, drawing on the Pāli *suttas*, *Abhidhamma*, and commentaries.

A convenient place to begin is with the overview of *animitta* states at MA.II 355[11]:

> "Thirteen *dhammas* are named '*animitta-ceto-vimutti*': *vipassanā*, the 4 formless states, the four paths and the four fruitions. In this connection, '*vipassanā* removes the sign of permanence (*nicca-nimittaṃ*), the sign of happiness (*sukha-*), the sign of self (*atta-*),' so it is known as *animitta*. The four formless states are known as *animitta* due to the non-existence of the sign of form (*rūpa-*) (in them). The paths and fruitions are *animitta* due to the non-existence of defilements that make signs (*nimitta-kārākanaṃ*) [in them.] *Nibbāna* is just *animitta*. But that is not a *ceto-vimutti*, so it is not taken [here as a fourteenth]."

This statement seems quite well founded in the *Tipiṭaka*. The highest level *animitta-ceto-vimutti* is suggested by a verse at

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Thag.92 and Dhp.92, which says that an arahant's "field of action (*gocaro*) is void and signless liberation (*suññato animitto ca vimokkho*)." That there are lower-level *animitta* states is indicated by A.III.397, which says that a monk may attain *animitta-ceto-samādhi*, but later return to lay life, due to keeping too much company. Similarly, at A.IV.78–9, Brahmā-gods say of someone who abides in *animitta-ceto-samādhi* that, if he practices *further*, he will attain the goal of the holy life, and describe him as still having a remainder of grasping (*sa-upādisese*).

1. The Formless States as Animitta

Some support is given to this notion in the *Tipiṭaka*. Firstly, it should be noted that *animitta-samādhi* is listed after,[12] or said to be entered after,[13] the four formless states,[14] and that the *animitta* (and void and desireless) stimulations (*phassas*) are said to impinge on a person emerging from the cessation-of-perception-and-feeling, which is entered from the fourth formless state (M.I. 302). There is, therefore, a clear affinity between *animitta-samādhi* and the formless states. That the formless states are themselves *animitta*, in a certain sense, is indicated by Ps.II.36, which describes the four formless attainments as "liberation as emergence [from the object] externally (*bahiddhāvuṭṭhāno vimokkho*)," for *nimittas* are often said to be "external";[15] indeed, p. 35 goes on to say that each of the four paths "emerges externally from all signs (*sabbanimittehi*)."

An interesting passage linking the formless states to *animitta* ones, and also indicating something of the nature of *animitta* states, is at A.IV.426–8. Here Ānanda describes:

> "the attainment of a chance over the crowding obstacle [i.e., the five *kāmaguṇas*] awakened to by the Exalted One . . . for the bringing to an end of *dukkha*."[16]

He explains this thus:

> "There will be just the eye, but one will not experience those visible shapes and that sense-sphere (*te rūpā tañ' cāyatanaṃ no paṭisaṃvedissati*); . . . there will be just the body, but one will not experience those touchables and that sense-sphere."

In answer to a question, he explains that a person in such a state is conscious (*saññī*), not unconscious, and that he is either in one of the first three formless states, or in a samādhi which he had previously described thus:

> "Sister, this samādhi which is neither inclined towards (*abhinato*), nor inclined away (*apanato*), in which the restraint is not controlled by conscious effort (*sasaṅkhāra-*), but has the habit of self-denial, which from its release is steadfast (*vimuttattā ṭhito*), from its steadfastness is content, from its contentment is not troubled—this samādhi, Sister, is said by the Exalted One to have gnosis as fruition (*aññāphalo*)."[17]

The description of this samādhi matches that of one at S.I.28, which very probably describes *animitta-samādhi*. There the Buddha is in much pain from an injury to his foot. As he bears it mindfully, gods come to praise him, one saying, "See how his *citta* is well-practiced in samādhi and released. It is not inclined towards . . . (etc.) . . . self-denial." Now as D.II.100 describes the dying Buddha as entering *animitta-samādhi* to attain ease from his pains, such a pain-transcending samādhi is very likely to be *animitta-samādhi* too. This is confirmed by a passage at M.III.108, which says of a person in *animitta-ceto-samādhi*:

> "He comprehends, 'This perceiving is empty of the plane of no-thing . . . of the plane of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. And there is only this that is not void (*asuññataṃ*), that is to say, the six sensory spheres (the sense-organs) that, conditioned by life (*jīvita-*), are grounded on the body itself.'"

Such a description would be applicable to the state at A.IV.426–8, "There will be just the eye . . .," which is thus confirmed as an *animitta* state.

We see, therefore, that *animitta-samādhi* is closely associated with the formless states, and that the latter are *animitta* in the sense of having transcended external sensory "signs." In both the formless states and in *animitta-samādhi*, a person is not hemmed in by the *kāma-guṇas*, the strands of sensual-pleasure, but is in a state where he is fully conscious (except in the fourth formless state), with sense-organs operative, yet without experiencing any of the five sense-objects. In the *animitta-samādhi*,

however, the mind also transcends the (mental) objects of the formless states, and is in a state that results in gnosis, or arahantship.

II. Vipassanā as Animitta

This is probably described at S.IV.269, where Moggallāna describes how the Buddha had helped him with his training:

> "So I, friend, paying no attention to any sign (*sabbanimittānam amanasikārā*), entered on and dwelt in *animitta-ceto-samādhi*; but dwelling in that dwelling, my consciousness was following after signs (*nimittānusari-viññāṇaṃ*)."

This clearly refers to a relatively weak form of *animitta-ceto-samādhi*, for D.III.249 says that it is impossible for one who has *developed animitta-ceto-vimutti* to have a consciousness that "follows after signs," for this *ceto-vimutti* is the "escape" (*nissaraṇaṃ*) from all signs. The *animitta-ceto-samādhi* of S.IV.269, then, is not fully developed: indeed the Buddha is said to come to Moggallāna to urge him to make his *citta* steadfast, one-pointed, and composed in the *ceto-samādhi*. Moggallāna's state is probably a form of *vipassanā-samādhi*, as the commentary, SA.III.90, states.

Ps.II.63, describing the *vipassanā* stage of "understanding of appearance as terror," says, "When he gives attention [to phenomena] as impermanent, the sign appears to him as terror (*bhayato*),"[18] while Ps.I.91 clearly seems to see this as the *animitta* dwelling (*vihāra*; as at S.IV.269, above):

> Contemplating the sign as terror, from being resolved on the *animitta*, he sees decay (*vayaṃ*) each time he applies his contemplation; this is the *animitta* dwelling.[19]

"*Animitta-ceto-samādhi*" and "*animitta vihāra*," then, seem to be terms used in the *Tipiṭaka* for certain states involving *vipassanā* into impermanence. The state that exists at the interface of the development of *vipassanā* and the occurrence of the path (and assigned to neither) is also an *animitta* state. This is "change of lineage" (*gotrabhū*), or "understanding of emergence and turning away from the external," of which Ps.II.64 says:

> When he gives attention as impermanent, his *citta* emerges from the sign; his *citta* enters into (*pakkhandati*) the *animitta*.[20]

Ps.I.66 adds that it "overcomes," for example, "the sign," and also "the sign of all formations externally" (*bahiddhāsaṅkhāra-nimittaṃ*), so as to "enter into," respectively, the *animitta*, and "stopping (*nirodho*), nibbāna."

III. The Paths (Maggas) *and Fruitions* (Phalas) *as* Animitta

That *animitta* states play an important role in the path to nibbāna is clearly seen at S.IV.360:

> "And what, monks, is the path which goes to the unconditioned? Void samādhi, *animitta-samādhi*, desireless samādhi."

Indeed, we have seen above that a samādhi identifiable as *animitta* is said to have "gnosis as fruition."[21] Ps.II.63–4, after discussing the *animitta* states "understanding appearance as terror," and "change of lineage" (as above), says of path-knowlege, "When he gives attention as impermanent, he is freed (*vimuccati*) by the *animitta* liberation (*vimokkhena*) . . . ." That is, states of path-consciousness are *animitta*, and at this level (upwards), *animitta* states are forms of "liberation." It is probably at this stage, too (or at "change of lineage"), that an *animitta* state becomes known as a "gateway to liberation (*vimokkha-mukha*)," where *citta* "enters into (*-sampakkhandatāya*) the *animitta* state (*dhātu*)" (Ps.II.48).[22]

As regards the fruitions, Ps.II.42 says that the "desireless" liberation is the four paths, four fruitions and nibbāna. As the "desireless" is otherwise treated parallel to the *animitta*, this implies that the same can be said of the *animitta*. A passage at Ps.I.91 probably describes an *animitta* fruition:

> When he contemplates the signs as terror by treating [their] occurrence with equanimity, and adverting to stopping, nibbāna, as *animitta*, and enters upon attainment because he is resolved

upon the *animitta*, this is *animitta* attainment (*samāpatti*).

Indeed, the commentary on this sees such an *animitta* "attainment" as the "attainment of fruition."[23]

The *Abhidhamma* treats the paths and fruitions in a slightly different way. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* describes the first path as:

i) any of the four (or five) supramundane *jhānas* (§277 and 343),[24] or
ii) any of the four (or five) supramundane *jhānas* that are void (§344–5), or
iii) that are desireless (§351–2).[25]

No mention is made of any *animitta* supramundane *jhāna* as path. On the fruitions, however, it is said that for any of the above three types of first path, their fruits will be a supramundane *jhāna* that is void, *animitta*, or desireless (§505–22).[26]

IV. Is There an Animitta *Path?*

The above conflict between the *Abhidhamma* and the *suttas* (Ps.) as to whether there is an *animitta* path is taken up in the commentarial literature. An examination of this discussion gives an insight into some of the reasons why *animitta* states are known as "*animitta*." Asl.221 and Vism.668 discuss this and say that a path can be known as "void," "*animitta*" or "desireless" for three reasons:

i) "From (way of) arrival (*āgamanato*)": e.g., a path will be "void" if the *vipassanā* that leads to it is "void"; the *vipassanā* will be "void" if its dominant feature is insight into anattā, seeing formations (*saṅkhāras*) as void (*suñña*).
ii) "From its own special qualities (*saguṇato*)": it is "void" as it is empty of attachment, hatred and delusion; it is "*animitta*" due to the absence of the "signs" of sense-objects, or the "signs" of attachment, etc.; it is "desireless" due to the absence of desire as attachment, etc.
iii) "From its object (*ārammaṇato*)": a path takes nibbāna as its object, and this is void (as void of attachment, etc.) *animitta* and desireless.

Asl.221 explains that the method of the *suttas* gives a name to a path by methods ii) and iii), but the *Abhidhamma* only does so by method i), and *animitta-vipassanā* cannot give its name to the path it arrives at, for *vipassanā* knowledge is "not literally (*nippariyāyato*) *animitta*" (Vism.659). This is because, while it severs "signs" of permanence, happiness and self, so as to be to some extent "signless," still it "frequents (*carati*) sign-*dhammas*" (Asl.223); "it is not opposed to the discernment of impermanence which has the signs of formations as its object" (Asl.224), and "there is no abandoning the sign of formations" (Vism.659). That is, inasmuch as *vipassanā* is taken up with the "sign" of conditioned phenomena, it can never be *wholly* "signless," and so cannot give its name to a "signless" path, in the *Abhidhamma* method. Nevertheless, there can still be *animitta* fruitions by this method, as we have seen.

V. The Meaning of Nimitta

Having mapped out the range of states known as "*animitta*," we can now investigate the nature and range of "*nimittas*," before going on to examine the method of practice that leads beyond them, and the nature of the *animitta* states to which such practices lead.

While *nimitta* has been translated as "sign" so far, we can see its range of meaning, in general usage, as being:

i) A deliberately made sign, or "hint," as when the Buddha made a broad *nimitta* about the possibility of his living on for the rest of the aeon.[27]
ii) A natural sign or indication, not deliberately made as a sign. At S.V.150, for example, in not noting what his master says he likes, and reaches out for, etc., an inexperienced cook is said not to take proper note of his master's *nimitta*. One who reads the mind of another, without going off what anyone says, and without using the power of meditation for direct thought-reading, is said to do so by means of a *nimitta*, i.e., a behavioural sign.[28] Earthquakes are said to be the *nimittas*, or signs, of the four main events in a buddha's life,[29] while ageing, sickness, death, and an ascetic are the four *nimittas*, or "indications" of the nature of life, leading to a *bodhisatta's* renunciation.[30]
iii) A specific type of natural sign—a sign of what is to come, a

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portent. Thus, "diviners of *nimittas*" examined the 32 marks on the body of the newborn *bodhisatta*,[31] taking three of them as the *nimitta*, or "sign" of longevity.[32] Similarly, we read that "that is a prior sign (*pubbe nimittaṃ*) of the manifestation of Brahmā, when the light arises, and the glory shines."[33]

iv) A marker, as when hillsides and rocks, etc. are taken as *nimittas* showing the boundaries of a monastic residence.[34]

v) A (male or female) sexual organ (Vin.III.28, and 21) or sexual characteristic (Dhs.§633, 644).

vi) Characteristic, as in *bālanimittāni*, "the characteristics of a fool" (M.III.163), and as implied in "But you, householder, have all the characteristic marks and signs (*ākārā te liṅgā te nimittā*) of a householder,"[35] and in the phrase "face-*nimitta*," which is what is said to be seen to be seen and pondered in a mirror (M.I.100).

vii) General appearance, or gestalt, as in the common passage, "Having seen a visible shape with the eye, he does not seize on the general appearance (*nimittaggāhī*), he does not seize on the detail (*anubyañjanaggāhī*) . . . ."[36]

viii) Ground, reason or cause, as when the Buddha says that he does not behold the *nimitta* on which anyone could reprove him for having *āsavas* not yet destroyed.[37] Similarly, at M.III.157, a monk says that he does not know *nimitta*, the reason, why, in his attempts to see gods, their light and visible form come to disappear.[38]

ix) Aim, as when an archer "takes a straight aim (*nimittaṃ ujum karoti*)" (Miln.418).

x) The object of concentration in *samatha* meditation: this is well attested in the commentarial literature, e.g., at Vism.125–6: in concentrating on an external device, such as a clay disc, the device itself is the "preliminary" *nimitta*; by concentrating on it, the meditator comes to see a mental image of it, even with closed eyes—this is the "learning" *nimitta*: by his concentrating on this, it appears in a purified, abstracted form, the "counterpart" *nimitta*. In the latter two cases, the *nimitta* can be seen as a "reflex image," which is both a "sign" that the meditation is proceeding well and the "target" of concentration (cf. sense ix, above). Such *samādhi-nimittas* are also alluded to in the *suttas*. The "preliminary" sign is alluded to at Ps.II.38, which says, "Here, someone gives attention to the *nimitta* of blue-black internally in himself," the commentary explaining this to mean a person's hair. A reflex-image *nimitta* is referred to, e.g., at A.IV.418, on a monk who is unskilled at entering on and dwelling in the first *jhāna*:" he does not pursue, nor develop, nor cultivate that *nimitta*."[39]

We see then that, in general usage, *nimitta* means a sign or indication, which may be a hint, or an indication of contemporary or future thoughts, desires, events or features of life, or a (boundary) marker, sexual or other characteristic, general appearance, ground or reason, aim, or a meditation object that is either physical or a mental reflex image. It is a delimited object of attention, that may, or should be taken as indicating something beyond itself or the general features of that to which it belongs.

VI. Types of "Signs"

To investigate the range of "signs," a useful passage is that at S.I.188 (and Thag.224–6) where Ānanda gives advice to a monk affected by attachment (*rāga*):

> " i) Your *citta* is on fire because of a perversion of perception (*saññāya vipariyesā*);
> ii) Avoid [any] pleasant (*subham*) *nimitta*, connected to attachment;
> iii) Look on formations as other, as *dukkha*, not as self,
> iv) Quench this great attachment, do not burn again and again.
> v) Develop the *citta*, one-pointed and well-concentrated, to the [contemplation of] the unpleasant (*asubhāya*),
> vi) Let your mindfulness be concerned with the body, be full of disenchantment (*nibbidā-*)
> vii) And develop the *animitta*, cast out the latent tendency to conceit (*mānānusayam*);
> viii) Then by the full understanding of conceit, you will wander calm."[40]

Firstly, this passage sees the mind as "burning" with attachment due to a "perversion of perception" that focusses on attach-

ment-linked "pleasant-*nimittas*." A.II.52 sees such "perversions" (*vipallāsā*) of perception (and of *citta* and view) as being seeing permanence in the impermanent, *dukkha* in the not-*dukkha*, attā in the anattā, and the pleasant in the unpleasant. This implies that "pleasant-*nimittas*" are deceptive in their nature.

Secondly, the passage shows that "pleasant-*nimittas*" are clearly an important type of *nimitta*. We see, for example, at A.I.3, that it is lack of systematic attention to a pleasant-*nimitta* that leads to the arising and strengthening of sensual-desire (*kāma-cchando*),[41] and lack of systematic attention to the repulsive (*paṭigha-*)-*nimitta* that leads to malevolence. Key forms of pleasant *nimittas* must be sexual ones, and indeed, "*nimitta*" can itself mean a male or female sexual organ or characteristic, as seen above. Related to the pleasant-*nimitta* is the dear-*nimitta*, referred to at S.IV.73 and Thag.98:

> "Seeing a visible object, his mindfulness is confused, attending to a sign of what is dear (*piyanimittam*).
> With an attached (*sāratto-*) *citta* he experiences (it), and stays clinging to it"
> (this is then repeated for the other five sense-channels).

Attending to "signs" in things, and seeing them as pleasant or dear, leads to an attached state of mind that clings to such signs. Such attachment is broken, at S.I.188, above, by a process involving insight into the three marks, contemplation of the "unpleasant," and developing the *animitta* state.

Not only does attention to certain *nimittas* lead to attachment, but we also find that the commentaries see attachment, etc., as themselves being *nimittas*. In discussing what *nimittas* are absent in an *animitta* state, including nibbāna, they refer to attachment-, hatred- and delusion-*nimittas*.[42]

M.I.297 also says that attachment, etc., *produce nimittas*, which MA.II.355 explains thus:

> Just so, when a person's attachment does not arise, then one is not able to know [him as] "*ariyan*" or "worlding." But when attachment arises, it arises as if making a *nimitta* for perceiving "this person, indeed, is one with attachment"—just as a brand identifies a calf as belonging to a certain herd.

That is, attachment, etc., betray what kind of a person someone is.

Another type of *nimitta* consists simply of sense-objects. This is the meaning in the common phrase "this consciousness-informed (sensitive) body and all external (*bahiddhā*) *nimittas*" (e.g., M.III.18), meaning the sentient organism and all it can perceive. This meaning is also found at S.III.10, where venerable Kaccāna says:

> "And how is one a token-follower (*niketasārī*)? One who is in bondage of token-following to the *nimitta* of visible shapes (*rūpa-nimitta-*), is called a 'token follower'" (parallel passages follow on the other five sense-objects).

Commentarial passages on *nimittas* that are absent in *animitta* states also refer to *rūpa-nimitta*, etc.[43] MA.II.352, commenting on the "all *nimittas*" that one in *animitta-ceto-samādhi* does not attend to (M.I.296–7), says, "all objects (*ārammaṇas*), visual shape etc.," though p. 353 qualifies this by saying that a person has nibbāna as object.

Another type of *nimitta* said by the commentaries to be absent in *animitta* states comprises permanence-, happiness-, and self-*nimittas*.[44]

A final type of *nimitta* is formations-*nimitta*: we have seen that *vipassanā* still frequents *saṅkhāra-nimitta* (p. 31), and that "change of lineage" overcomes "the sign of all formations externally" (sec. II). As to what the "*nimittas* of formations" are, this is suggested by the *Abhidharmakośa*, which says that *nirvāṇa*, object of *animitta-samādhi*, lacks various *nimittas*, including "the three *saṃskṛtalakṣaṇas*: birth, duration-change and death."[45] This alludes to a passage found at A.I.152, which describes the "three constructed characteristics of the constructed" (*saṅkhatassa saṅkhata-lakkhaṇāni*) as those of "arising" (*uppādo*), "decay" (*vayo*), and "becoming otherwise of what persists" (*ṭhitassa aññathattam*).

Several of these senses of *nimitta* are included in a passage at Ps.II.68, which says:

> What is the *animitta* liberation? Knowledge of contemplation of impermanence is *animitta* liberation, since it liberates from the *nimitta* as permanent.

This formula is then repeated, replacing "impermanence" and "as permanent," respectively, by: "*dukkha*" and "as happy"; "*anattā*" and "as self"; "disenchantment" and "as delight" (*nandiyā*); "detachment" (*virāgā*) and "as attachment"; "stopping" and "as origin" (*samudayato*); "relinquishment" and "as grasping"; "the *animitta*" and "all *nimittas*"; "the desireless" and "as desire" (*paṇidhiyā*); "the void" and "as misinterpretation" (*abhinivesato*).

We have seen above that *nimittas* may be delusive: this would apply to pleasant-, dear-, permanence-, happiness- and self-*nimittas*. These indicate to the mind features of the world that, on examination, are seen to be empty. Attachment-, hatred- and delusion *nimittas* would be *nimittas* in the sense of being "characteristics," though we have also seen that they themselves produce *nimittas*, i.e., give indications of the nature of a person. Sense-object *nimittas* would be *nimittas* due to being the target of perceptions, and are taken to indicate particular features of the world. Certain such object-*nimittas* are those selected as *samādhi-nimittas* in the *jhānas*, which are finally transcended in the formless attainments, said to be *animitta* because they are not tied down or limited by any sensory object. Formation-*nimittas* would be the "characteristics" that indicate the nature of formations.

VII. Escape from the Bondage of Nimittas

The state of being entranced by *nimittas* is clearly portrayed, in the *suttas*, as one full of danger. A graphic passage at S.IV.168 ironically asserts:

> "It would be a good thing, monks, if the organ of sight were seared with a red-hot iron pin, on fire, all ablaze, a glowing mass of flames. Then there would be no seizing of the general appearance (*nimitta*) or details of visible shapes discernible by the eye. Monks, consciousness, persisting, might persist in being tied by the satisfaction in the general appearance or details."

To die in such a state, or in one where one is taken up with objects of the other five senses, is said to lead to rebirth in hell or as an animal.[46] The idea that entrancement by sense-object *nimittas* brings a state of bondage and limitation is emphasised at M.III.225, where Venerable Kaccāna (cf. sec. VI) says:

> "If, your reverences, after a monk has seen a visual shape with the eye, his consciousness runs after visual-shape-signs (*rūpa-nimittānusārī*), is tied by satisfaction in visual-shape-signs, is bound to satisfaction in visual-shape-signs, is fettered by the fetter of satisfaction in visual-shape-signs, then the consciousness of what is external (*bahiddhā viññāṇaṃ*) is said to be confused and distracted" (and so on for the other five sense-channels).

To escape such bondage, the practitioner begins by "guarding the senses." Rather than seizing on the general appearance or details of a sense-object, it is said:

> "If he dwells with the organ of sight uncontrolled, covetousness and dejection, evil unskilled states of mind, might predominate. So he fares along controlling it; he guards the organ of sight" (and so on for the other five sense channels).[47]

Vism.20 classifies this practice under *sīla*, and explains it thus:

> "He does not seize on the general appearance"—he does not seize on the sign of a woman or a man, or any sign that is a basis for defilement such as the sign of the pleasant, etc.; he stops at what is merely seen. "He does not seize on the details of it"—he does not seize on any aspect classed as hand, foot, smile, laughter, talk, looking ahead, looking aside, etc., . . . But he seizes only on that which is really there.

In such a practice, the mind does not proliferate the mere objects of the senses into "indications" of entrancing phenomena. Buddhaghosa's illustration here is that of a laughing woman who ran past a monk: the monk saw no "woman," but, from noticing the teeth, perceived only a collection of bones (and attained arahantship). Buddhaghosa's explanation is reminiscent of a passage at S.IV.72–3 (cf. Ud.8). There the Buddha gives a "teaching in brief" to the ageing Mālunkyaputta, apparently so as to rid him of all desire, attachment and fondness for sense-objects, which lead to an attached mind clinging to a sign of what

is dear (see sec. VI, above). The teaching is:

> ". . . in the seen, there will be just the seen; in the heard, there will be just the heard; in the sensed (*mute*), there will be just the sensed; in the discerned (*viññāte*), there will be just the discerned."

SA.II.383 comments here:

> Visual consciousness sees in a visual shape merely a visual shape, it does not see the own-nature (*sabhāva*) of permanence, etc. . . . When a visual shape comes within range of visual consciousness, one does not become attached, hate, or become deluded.

The S.IV.72–3 teaching continues:

> "From that (*tato*), you, Mālunkyaputta, will not be by that (*na tena*); as (*yato*) you will not be by that, hence (*tato*) you will not be there (*na tattha*); as you, Mālunkyaputta, will not be there, hence you will not be here (*-idha*), beyond (*huram*), nor in between (*-antarena*) the two. This is the end of *dukkha*."

The meaning of this mysterious passage will be discussed below, but here we may note that keeping what is seen to the merely-seen, etc., clearly involves more than *sīla*.[48] Part of *sīla*, however, would be controlling unskilful thoughts arising from attention to certain *nimittas*. In doing this, a monk should attend, instead, to another *nimitta* associated with what is skilled (M.I.119). This leads on to the practice of samādhi, where the mind turns inward, away from "external" *nimittas* and toward the skilful *samādhi-nimitta*.[49] Finally, the practice of *vipassanā* starts to cut away all attachment to *nimittas*. S.IV.170, in a continuation of the S.IV.168 passage quoted above, says:

> "Let alone searing the faculty of sight with a red-hot iron pin . . . what if I attend thus: impermanent is the eye, impermanent are visual shapes, impermanent is visual consciousness, impermanent is visual stimulation, impermanent are pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings arising from visual stimulation" (etc., for the other five sense-channels).

Such a practice is said to lead to being disenchanted (*nibbindati*) with the eye, etc., so as to be detached (*virajjati*) and freed, attaining arahantship.

VIII. The Nature of the Animitta

The last quoted passage shows the connection of insight into impermanence with overcoming attachment to *nimittas*. A similar passage, at S.IV.50, describes a monk who sees "all *nimittas*"—i.e., all the phenomena mentioned in S.IV.170, above—as "becoming other" (*aññato*), such that he abandons *avijjā*. This is significant, as *Nettipakaraṇa* 119 sees the *āsava* of *avijjā* as abandoned by the *animitta* liberation.[50] As we have already seen (p. 29), the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* links insight into impermanence with the *animitta* dwelling. On the three liberations, it says:

> When one who has great resolution gives attention as impermanent, he acquires *animitta* liberation. When one who has great tranquility gives attention as *dukkha*, he acquires desireless liberation. When one who has great wisdom gives attention as anattā, he acquires void liberation (Ps.II.58).

Attention to phenomena as impermanent is said to have the following effect:

> When he gives attention as impermanent, he knows and sees the *nimitta* as it really is. Hence "right seeing" is said. Thus, by inference from that, all formations are seen as impermanent. Herein, doubt is abandoned.

The nature of this seeing of the *nimitta* as it really is is amplified by Ps.II.48:

> Now there are three gateways to liberation which lead to outlet from the world: i) to the contemplation of all formations as limited and circumscribed (*pariccheda-parivaṭṭumato*) and to the entering of *citta* into the *animitta dhātu* (*nibbāna*).[51]

Vism.657 comments here, "both as limited by rise and fall and as circumscribed by them." Vism.668 adds to this by saying:

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> When the path is arrived at by abandoning the signs of permanence, lastingness and eternalness, by effecting the resolution of the compact (*ghana-vinibbhogaṃ katvā*) of formations through the means of contemplation of impermanence, then it is called *animitta* [by the *sutta* method].

Insight into impermanence, then, leads to *animitta* states by resolving the "solid," "lasting" signs presented by the senses into a complex of components that have weak sign-value to the grasping mind and that themselves come and go so fast as to be insignificant and unworthy of attention. As Ps.II.36 says, in the *animitta* liberation, one "construes" (*karoti*) no sign in what one contemplates. In such a state, the mind can easily turn towards that which is beyond all signs, nibbāna. As M.I.296 says:

> "There are two conditions, your reverence, for the attainment of the *animitta-ceto-vimutti*: paying no attention to any *nimitta*, and paying attention to the *animitta dhātu*."[52]

In the *Nissāya-vagga* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, A.V.318–26, there are several passages that give us a further insight into *animitta* states. A number of descriptions of samādhis are given, such that the samādhis seem to be identical, and to be *animitta* states. The commentary sees them as "attainment of fruition" (*phala-samāpatti*), but as the fruitions are, in one aspect, *animitta*, this allows that the samādhis are *animitta* in nature.[53]

At A.V.321–2, Ānanda asks the Buddha:

> "May it be, venerable sir, that a monk's acquiring of samādhi may be of such a sort that, though he does not attend to eye or visible shapes . . . to body or touchables, though he does not attend to solidity (*paṭhaviṃ*), cohesion, heat or motion; to the sphere of infinite space, or of infinite consciousness, or of nothingness, or of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; though he does not attend to this world, or a world beyond; though whatever is seen, heard, sensed, discerned, attained, sought after, thought round by mind (*manasā*)—to (all) that he does not attend, and yet he does attend?"

To this, the Buddha replies (p. 322) that there is such a samādhi, as follows:

> "Herein, Ānanda, a monk attends thus: this is the real, this is the excellent, that is to say, the calming of all formations, the renunciation of all substrate, the destruction of craving, detachment (*virāgo*), stopping (*nirodho*), nibbāna."

This description seems a perfect match to the M.I.296 description of *animitta-ceto-vimutti*: not attending to a variety of worldly *nimittas*, and attending to nibbāna, the *animitta*. It also tallies with the Ps.I.66 description (above, p. 29) of "change of lineage," which is said to overcome "the sign of formations externally," and to "enter into stopping, nibbāna."[54]

The attention to ". . . detachment, stopping, nibbāna" is an interesting feature of the above passage. At A.V.110, one who contemplates "This is the real . . . detachment, nibbāna," is said to have *virāga-saññā*, and one who contemplates "This is the real . . . stopping, nibbāna," is said to have *nirodha-saññā*. The first of these perceptions is among five perceptions that "bring *vimutti* to maturity" (D.III.243), and both are among six perceptions that are "part of knowledge" (*vijjā-bhāgiyā*) (A.III.334). Likewise, at S.V.129–34, they are among a variety of perceptions that, if "developed and made much of," lead to one of the two fruits: the gnosis of the arahant, or the state of non-returning.[55] Such perceptions are also alluded to in the Ps.II.68 description of *animitta* liberation (p. 29, above). There, "knowledge of contemplation of stopping is *animitta* liberation, since it liberates from the sign as origin (*samudayato*)" and "knowledge of contemplation of detachment is *animitta* liberation, since it liberates from the sign as attachment (*rāgato*)." These passages suggest that insight into impermanence and into the constant cessation of specific phenomena undermine perceiving the sign of the arising of phenomena, to which the mind is usually attached, and open out into the perception of the cessation of the rise and fall of phenomena, nibbāna.

The series of objects not attended to at A.V.321–2 corresponds to that at M.III.104 ff., where a monk is said to be progressively "attending to the perception" of human beings, a village, the forest, earth, each of the four formless states, and *animitta-samādhi*, with each of the perceptions being "empty" (*suñño*) of the previous ones. Human beings, a village, and the forest correspond to the five sense-objects and senses, at

A.V.321–2; earth, very probably as a meditation "device," corresponds to the first of the four elements; the four formless states are found in both passages, and the *animitta-samādhi* stands out beyond all these.[56] Both passages seem to describe the *animitta* state as one reached by means of a progressive emptying, in which the signs of both gross and subtle phenomena are transcended.

Another *Nissāya-vagga* passage, at A.V.318–9 (cf. p.7–8), reinforces this impression. Here, Ānanda asks the Buddha:

> "May it be, venerable sir, that a monk's acquiring of samādhi is of such a sort that in solidity he is not percipient of solidity (*paṭhaviyaṃ paṭhavī-saññī*) . . . [this formula is then repeated for each of the items following solidity at A.V.321–2] . . . and yet he *is* percipient (*saññī*)?"

The Buddha replies that there is such a samādhi, where a monk is "percipient thus (*evaṃ-saññī*): this is the real . . . detachment, stopping, nibbāna." Such a samādhi must surely be the same as that at A.V.321–2, and is also reminiscent of the samādhi at A.IV.426–8, which we have argued (p. 26) to be an *animitta* samādhi. The description of the samādhi is indeed paradoxical. It is not so much that a person just does not attend to solidity, etc., but that *in* solidity, no solidity is perceived, as AA.V.2 says (on A.V.7–8), "having made solidity his object (*ārammaṇaṃ*), he would not be percipient with the arisen perception 'solidity.'" Solidity is perceived, as it were, as being empty of "solidity": *saññā*—"perception," "cognition," "recognition," or "interpretation," that which classifies or labels experience (correctly or incorrectly)[57]—does not latch onto a "sign" as a basis for seeing solidity *as* solidity. Rather, the mind attends to or perceives nibbāna, the signless; not attending to signs of solidity etc., it "sees through" solidity, etc., and focusses on that which is signless.

Another *Nissāya-vagga* passage illustrates this process. At A.V.324–6, the Buddha describes a monk who "meditates" (*jhāyati*) in such a way that his meditation is not dependent (*nissāya*) on any of the phenomena listed at p. 318–9, and yet he *does* meditate. The parallel between the passages suggests we are again dealing with *animitta-samādhi*. At the passage in question, however, the Buddha explains (p. 325–6) the type of meditation by saying:

> ". . . for the goodly thoroughbred of men, in solidity, the perception of solidity is *vibhūta*."[58]

"*Vibhūta*" can mean "made clear" or "destroyed," with AA.V.80 preferring the former:

> arisen perception of four-fold or five-fold *jhāna*, with solidity as object, is *vibhūta*, unconcealed (*pākaṭā*) . . . here it is born *vibhūta* from the state of being seen as *anicca-dukkha-anattā* by means of *vipassanā*.

The samādhi, however, is not seen only as *vipassanā*, which has formations as object, but as going further, too:

> he meditates on what is made clear (*vibhūtāṃ*), he meditates with fruition-attainment with nibbāna as object.

The nature of the *animitta* apprehension of nibbāna is suggested by a passage at A.V.8–9. Here, Ānanda asks Sāriputta the same question as he puts to the Buddha at p. 318–19 (above). In reply, Sāriputta says that he had previously attained such a samādhi, in which he was still percipient:

> "'the stopping of becoming (*bhava-nirodho*) [is] nibbāna, the stopping of becoming [is] nibbāna,' indeed to me, your reverence, one perception arose, and another ceased (*nirujjhati*). Just as, your reverence, from a burning splinter fire, one spark arises, another spark ceases . . . ."[59]

That is, in *animitta-samādhi*, brought about by insight into impermanence, as we have seen, even the perception of impermanence and of nibbāna as the stopping of the impermanent flow of phenomena (becoming)[60] is experienced as impermanent.

When the mind thoroughly contemplates any item of becoming, such as solidity, as impermanent, it overcomes the sign of permanence, etc., so as to perceive merely a stream of changing sense-objects not "indicative" of anything but themselves. This is the stage of *vipassanā*, which still has the sign of formations, of visible objects, etc., as its object. In the paths and fruitions, however, the mind does not even perceive the sign of sense-objects. It no longer registers *what* has been the object of

contemplation—it sees "through" these, for it has so developed the perception of perpetual (arising and) cessation, that it naturally turns towards nibbāna, the cessation of the very process of arising and ceasing. The perception of phenomena as impermanent, liable to cessation (*nirodhā-dhammas*; M.III.108), leads on to the perception of nibbāna: the stopping (*nirodha*) of such a cessation-prone flux.

The *animitta-samādhi*, as comprised of a flux of perceptions (A.V.8–9), is clearly itself impermanent. As M.III.108 says, it is known:

> "as constructed (*abhisaṃkhato*) and thought out . . . (it is) impermanent and liable to cessation."

One who knows this goes beyond *animitta-samādhi* and attains arahantship. For reasons that cannot be gone into here, I would argue, on the basis of the early Pāli texts (e.g., the four *Nikāyas*), that the experience of arahantship transcends other *animitta* states, as it has *no* object, not even the *animitta* nibbāna. Rather, it *is* nibbāna, in the form of an objectless (*anārammaṇa*), unsupported (*appatiṭṭhita*), non-manifestive (*anidassana*), infinite (*ananta*), unconstructed (*asaṅkhata*) and stopped (*niruddha*) consciousness. In the timeless experience of arahantship, *viññāṇa*, schooled so as not to be taken in by *nimittas* and wordly objects, does not even take nibbāna as object, but, objectless, transcends conditions and is the unconditioned.[61]

IX. The Animitta *and Conceit*

S.I.188, quoted above, shows an association between the *animitta* and the destruction of conceit: ". . . and develop the *animitta*, cast out the latent tendency to conceit." This is due to the fact that the *animitta-samādhi* grows out of strong insight into impermanence, and:

> "the perception of impermanence is to be developed for the uprooting of the 'I am' conceit (*asmimāno*). Meghiya, of one who is percipient of impermanence, the perception of anattā endures; one who is percipient of anattā wins the uprooting of the 'I am' conceit, nibbāna, even in this life."[62]

Insight into impermanence must undermine the ability to "conceive" of things in relation to ego-ideas, using them as ego-related "signs":

> By whatever they conceive it, it becomes otherwise from that; and that becomes false (*musā*) for him, a peurile, delusive (*mosa-*) dhamma. Nibbāna is the undelusive dhamma . . . (Sn.757–8).[63]

Knowing the swiftly changing nature of all *nimittas*, one conceives nothing on them, and turns from them as false, to nibbāna as the real. S.IV.72–3, quoted above, sec. VII, describes the state of one who does not conceive of phenomena as "this thing" or "that thing" in realtion to one's "self." SA.II.384 comments:

> "by that" . . . you will not be impassioned by that (*tena*) attachment. . . . "you will not be there" . . . in the seen, heard, sensed or discerned, you will not be bound, adhering and fixed.

As Ud.A.92 adds, on a parallel passage:

> you will not be adhering or fixed in the seen, heard, sensed or discerned by craving, conceit and views, "this is mine, this I am, this is my self."

X. The Animitta, *Void, and Desireless Liberations*

The connection of the *animitta* to the uprooting of conceit and the understanding of anattā shows that the *animitta* state is closely associated with the "void" state, which comes from insight into phenomena as void of "self" (e.g., M.I.297). We see at Ps.II.59, indeed:

> When one who has great resolution gives attention as impermanent, the *animitta* liberation is dominant in him. In development, two liberations (the void and desireless) follow upon it, are conascent conditions . . . .

At any one time, only one of the three liberations is dominant (Ps.II.65), but the others are there in a secondary sense for, in the *animitta* liberation for example, one has no desire for the

signs one has been liberated from, and is void of such desire (Ps.II.66). Indeed, we have seen how one in *animitta-samādhi* perceives sense-objects as being "empty" of themselves. M.I.297–8 also explains that while the void and signless *ceto-vimuttis* are in one sense different—as reflection on phenomena as void of self, and as not attending to any signs—in another sense they are the same. This is because attachment, hatred and delusion are each "productive of signs,"[64] and an arahant has destroyed these three, so that:

> "To the extent that *ceto-vimuttis* are *animitta*, unshakeable (*akuppā*) *ceto-vimutti* is shown to be their chief, for that unshakeable *ceto-vimutti* is void (*suññā*) of attachment, hatred and delusion."

This implies that "unshakeable *ceto-vimutti*"—described at M.I.204–5 as the goal of the holy life, and at MA.II.354 as *arahatta-phala-ceto-vimutti*— is both the highest void *ceto-vimutti* and the highest *animitta-ceto-vimutti*.

XI. Conclusion

In conclusion, let us draw together the strands of this survey. In a person's normal state, it is often the case that consciousness runs after, follows, clings to and is tied to "signs," that is, to "external" sensory objects that are taken as more than simple phenomena, but as indicating "people" and "things" in the world that are experienced as entrancing. The mind experiences them as "signs" with pleasant, sensuous, annoying, or dear associations. It also misperceives them so as to see permanence, happiness and I-ness where there is none. In this way, the "signs" or characteristics of attachment, hatred and delusion arise in the mind, and these "signs" give rise to more visible behavioural "signs" indicating the nature of the person.

The way beyond this trapped state of consciousness involves the practice of "guarding the senses": of mindfully monitoring the input of the senses so that there is no seizing on such misleading troublesome sensory indications, but a viewing of sense-objects as simply sense-objects. On the other hand, there may be the development of awareness of more salutory "signs," such

as that of the unpleasant, and usually ignored aspects of bodily existence. The development of inward states of calm concentration are also important. These turn the mind away from the distraction of "external" signs and focus on some chosen salutary "sign," which might concern some aspect of the foulness of the body, as referred to above, or one of the many other objects of *samatha* meditation, such as the breath. In such meditations, the mind gets taken up with a single, simple "sign," using it as a vehicle for developing profound levels of calm and purity, the four *jhānas*. From the fourth *jhāna*, a meditator can refine the process even further, by entering the four formless attainments. These go beyond *any* external sensory "sign" and, in this respect, are "signless." While they are still concerned with mental "signs," they transcend the five sense-objects and so provide the mind with no such "sign" to latch on to, not even the subtle "sign" used in the *jhānas*. Beyond the fourth formless state, moreover, lie states that are "signless" in a fuller sense, but cannot be entered unless *vipassanā*, or insight meditation, has been developed.

Insight into impermanence is the basis for a series of "signless" samādhis, insight into suffering is the basis of a series of "desireless" samādhis, and insight into non-self is the basis for a series of "void" samādhis. Any level of insight into impermanence is known as "signless," as it undermines or removes the misperception that seizes on delusive "signs" of permanence; the corresponding insights into suffering and non-self also remove the "signs" of happiness and self. Insight is not considered "signless" according to the *Abhidhamma* method, however, as it still contemplates the signs of sensory objects and of conditioned phenomena in general; it is aware of such phenomena and of their rise and fall. As insight reaches a high pitch, "change of lineage" occurs, which turns the mind away from conditioned phenomena towards the unconditioned, the signless nibbāna. The first apprehension of this, in the path-moment of stream-entry, is known as a "signless liberation" if it is attained on the basis of strong insight into impermanence. Indeed, any of the four paths and fruitions may be characterised as "signless" states on this basis (though the *Abhidhamma* has some terminological reservations, as we have seen). All such paths and fruitions are free of the signs of sense-objects or of conditioned phenomena,

and are free of the "signs" of attachment, hatred and delusion, and the behavioural signs these produce.

Insight into impermanence leads to such signless liberations in the following way. As is well known, in insight meditation the practitioner first contemplates the rising and falling of phenomena, and then focusses simply on their falling away, or cessation: "he sees decay each time he applies his contemplation" (p. 28, above). This leads to the "right seeing" of signs, so that the perception of them is "made clear" (p. 43). This is because he is aware of the limited, circumscribed nature of fleeting sensory phenomena; because he does not see compacted "things" and "people," but only such ephemeral phenomena. In this way, the mind comes to see such phenomena as wholly insignificant; it construes no "signs" in them. *Saññā*, perception, does not latch on to any "sign" such as that of "solidity"; *in* solidity, no "solidity" is perceived. The emphemeral nature of conditioned phenomena means that the mind progressively becomes empty of any perception of them: all, even "solidity," are seen as empty of any solid reality. In such a state, the mind can pass beyond its previous terror at constant decay, to have total equanimity at conditioned phenomena; it is "neither inclined towards nor inclined away" (p. 27, above). Setting aside ignorance (ignoreance), it can "see through" conditioned phenomena so as to attend to the unconditioned: the signless nibbāna, which is devoid of graspable "signs." In the four paths and the first three fruitions, consciousness takes signless nibbāna as its object, while in the fruition of arahantship, I contend, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) has *no* object, not even a signless one, but *is* nibbāna.

By their insight into impermanence, the signless liberations not only undermine ignorance, but also conceit, for they dissolve away any apparently solid basis for I-ness into an insignificant, ephemeral flux, "beyond" which lies the unconditioned, which offers no "signs" as a basis for I-ness. The signless liberations are also closely related to the "void" and "desireless" ones, for they perceive phenomena as empty of themselves, are empty of attachment, etc., and also undercut desire for signs.

NOTES

* Given at the tenth Symposium on Indian Religions, Oxford, April 1984.

1. But see, e.g., Ps.II.35 ff., Vism.657–9, 668–9, Asl.221–4; E. Conze *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, p. 61–7; P. Vajiranana Mahāthera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*, Buddhist Missionary Society, Kuala Lumpur, 1975, ch. 29.
2. E.g., Vin.III.92–3, A.III.397, S.IV.360.
3. E.g., M.I.297 ff., D.III.249.
4. E.g., Vin.III.92–3, Ps.II.35 ff., Thag.92 (=Dhp.92).
5. Ps.II.48 ff. and 69.
6. Ps.I.91 and 65.
7. Vin.III.92–3, Ps.I.91.
8. Ps.I.91.
9. M.I.302.
10. Ps.II.48.
11. Commentary on M.I.296 ff.
12. E.g., S.V.269.
13. M.III.105–8.
14. The "sphere of infinite space," the "sphere of infinite consciousness," the "sphere of nothingness," and the "sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception." These are 4 mystical states entered after the four *jhānas*, or tranquil meditations. All eight states are part of the path of *samatha*, or "calm" meditation. "Calm" meditation on its own cannot lead to nirvāṇa, for which *vipassanā*, or "insight" meditation is also needed.
15. E.g., M.III.225, M.III.18, and cf. Ps.II.64 and 66.
16. That the "crowding obstacle" is the five *kāmaguṇas*, or "strands of sensual pleasure," can be seen from A.IV.449 and from the commentary on this A.IV.426–8 passage.
17. In answer to the question "*kimphalo*," AA.IV.198 seems to construe "*aññāphalo*" as "is the fruition of *aññā*," for it sees the samādhi itself *as* a *phala*, explaining it as *arahatta-phala-samādhi*, the samādhi that is the fruition of arahantship. The *Critical Pali Dictionary*, however, takes "*aññāphalo*" here as meaning "resulting in perfect knowlege," seeing "*phalo*" as an adjective.
18. "When he gives attention [to phenomena] as suffering, occurrence (*pavattaṃ*) appears to him as terror. When he gives attention [to phenomena] as non-self, the sign and occurrence appear to him as terror."
19. Parallel passages are then given with "desire" (*paṇidhiṃ*), then "misinterpretation" (*abhinivesaṃ*), for "sign," and with "the desireless," then "the void," for "the *animitta*."
20. And giving attention as suffering and non-self are said, respectively, to lead to *citta* emerging from "occurrence" (*pavattā*), and "the sign and occurrence," so as to enter, respectively, into "non-occurrence" and *nirodha-nibbāna-dhātu*.
21. And cf. S.III.93, which states "*animitta-samādhi*, developed and made much of, is of great fruit (*mahāpphalo*)."

22. Cf. *L'Abhidharmakośa*, transl. L. de La Vallée Poussin, V.186–7 (ch.VIII, 25 a–b), which sees the *animitta-samādhi* (and the desireless and void ones) as being either pure and mundane, or immaculate, without cankers (*anāsrava*) and supramundane, a *vimokṣamukha*.

23. It may be, then, that an "*animitta*-attainment" is always at the level of fruition, though Miln. 333 lists *animitta-phala-samāpatti* (and the attainments of the desireless and void fruitions) separately from the fruitions of stream-entry, once-returning, non-returning and arahantship. Moreover, Ps.I.91 not only describes the *animitta* (and the desireless and void) "dwelling" (see above), and "attainment," but also the *animitta* (and desireless and void) "dwelling-attainment," described by combining the descriptions of the *animitta* "dwelling" and "attainment." It is hard to say what this is, though it may possibly be what Ps.I.65 refers to when it lists the four paths and four fruitions in ascending order of spiritual development, and *then* lists "void-dwelling" and "*animitta*-dwelling" (but not "desireless-dwelling," cf. Thag.92, above, p.25).

24. Asl.214 sees such *jhānas* as "of one momentary flash of consciousness."

25. The other three paths have a more compressed treatment (§ 362–4), but the implication is that they are to be dealt with in a parallel way.

26. The other three fruitions have a more compressed treatment (§ 553), but the implication is that they are to be treated in a parallel way.

27. Vin.II.289, D.II.103, S.V.259, A.IV.309, Ud.62, and cf. Vibh.352–3 definition of "signifying" (*nemittakatā*).

28. A.I.170–1; cf. D.III.103–4 and Ps.II.227.

29. Bv.8, v.36.

30. Bv.18, v.28.

31. D.III.158 and 171, cf. D.I.9.

32. D.III.151, and cf. Sn.575: "life" (*jīvitaṃ*) is *animitta*—without a sign as to its length.

33. D.I.220; cf. D.I.209 and 225.

34. Vin.I.106; cf. A.III.110.

35. M.I.360; cf. D.II.62.

36. E.g., M.I.180, D.I.70.

37. M.I.72; cf. A.II.9 and A.IV.83.

38. And at A.I.82, *nimitta* is used as if it were parallel in meaning to *nidāna*, *hetu* and *paccaya*.

39. And cf. Vibh.193, Ps.I.164; M.III.161; A.III.422; A.I.256, A.III.319 and S.V.278.

40. Lines ii. and v. are found at Sn.341; lines vii.-viii. are found at Sn.342 and Thig.21; line v. is the second half of Thig.20; line vi. is similar to the first half of Thig.20; lines vii. and v. are reminiscent of Thig.105; and line ii. is reminiscent of M.I.26.

41. Cf. the "crowding obstacle" of the strands of sensual pleasure, note 16.

42. DA.1036, AA.III.347, Vism.668 (see above p. 30); on nibbāna—MA.II.367, Dhp.A.172 (on Dhp.92).

43. DA.1036, AA.III.347, Vism.668 (see above p. 30), and cf. *L'Abhidharmakośa* V.185 (ch. VIII, 24a).

44. AA.III.347, MA.II.355, Asl.223 (see above, p. 31).

45. *L'Abhidharmakośa* V.185 (ch. VIII, 24a).

46. In the case of the mental "sense-channel," there is no talk in terms of *nimittes*.

47. E.g., M.I.180, D.I.70.

48. At Ud.8, the recipient of this teaching, Bāhiya, soon reaches arahantship by its practice.

49. Cf. Thag.1105 and S.V.156.

50. The "influxes" (*āsavā*) of sensual desire (*kāma*) and becoming (*bhava*) are seen as abandoned by the "desireless" liberation, and that of views (*diṭṭhi*) by the "void" liberation.

51. ii) and iii) deal with how *citta* enters into the "desireless" *dhātu*, and the "void" *dhātu*.

52. MA.II.352 explains the *animitta-dhātu* as nibbāna.

53. AA.V.80 (on A.V.325–6), and cf. AA.V.2–3 (on A.V.7–9).

54. Cf. *L'Abhidharmakośa* V.185 (ch. VIII, 24a), which describes the *animitta-samādhi* as "the contemplation in which the ascetic considers *nirodha*."

55. Cf. M.I.435–6.

56. The rest of the items at A.V.321–2 seem to be of a summarising nature.

57. See, e.g., S.III.87, D.I.93, Asl.110 and Vism.462.

58. At A.I.287–91, and A.IV.400, an arahant is said to be a "goodly thoroughbred of men," and at A.I.77 and A.II.114–5, "goodly thoroughbred" horses are likened to arahants. But at A.I.244–6, such a horse is compared to any ariyan person, such as a stream-enterer. Note that at S.I.28, the Buddha is said to be a thoroughbred because he mindfully endures pain—cf. p. 27.

59. Cf. at S.II.119, the non-arahant Nārada reports that he has seen, as it really is, by wisdom: "the stopping of becoming (is) nibbāna."

60. "Becoming" is clearly a term used to cover "solidity," etc.—all condition phenomena. This is illustrated by S.IV.23–4, on one who "conceives" (*maññati*) of the eighteen *dhātus* and related forms of stimulation and feeling: he is said to "delight in becoming."

61. The arahant's consciousness cannot be in this state all the time. For arguments to back up this set of contentions, see my Ph.D. thesis, "The Concept of the Person in Pāli Buddhist Literature," Lancaster, 1981, chs. 10–11. See also my "Consciousness and Nibbāna in the Pāli Suttas," *Journal of Studies in Mysticism* (now incorporated in *Religious Traditions*), La Trobe University, Vol. 2, no. 2, Spring 1979, p. 70–85. In this article, I made a preliminary investigation of the *Nissāya-vagga* passages; not realizing that the samādhi referred to must be *animitta-samādhi*, I suggested that it was itself objectless, and comprised the "perception" of nibbāna *simply* in the sense of the "seeing-through" of empty conditioned phenomena. This misconception is also implicit in my paper, "The Nature of the Tathāgata," in *Buddhist Studies - Ancient and Modern*, ed. P. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky, Curzon Press, London, 1983. A revised version of the former article is to be published, as "Consciousness Mysticism in Early Buddhism," in *The Mystic and the Symbol—Studies in Indian and Comparative Religious Thought*, ed. Karel Werner.

62. A.IV.358, cf. S.II.155.
63. Cf. S.IV.170, p. 39: all *nimittas* are "becoming other."
64. See above, p. 34.

Abbreviations (all references are to Pali Text Society editions)

A.	=	*Aṅguttara-nikāya*
AA.	=	*Aṅguttara-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā*
Asl.	=	*Atthasālinī*
D.	=	*Dīgha-nikāya*
DA.	=	*Dīgha-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā*
Dhp.	=	*Dhammapada*
Dhp.A.	=	*Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*
Dhs.	=	*Dhammasaṅgaṇī*
M.	=	*Majjhima-nikāya*
MA.	=	*Majjhima-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā*
Miln.	=	*Milindapañha*
Ps.	=	*Paṭisambhidāmagga*
S.	=	*Saṃyutta-nikāya*
SA.	=	*Saṃyutta-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā*
Thag.	=	*Theragāthā*
Thig.	=	*Therīgāthā*
Ud.	=	*Udāna*
Ud.A.	=	*Udāna-aṭṭhakathā*
Vibh.	=	*Vibhaṅga*
Vin.	=	*Vinaya*
Visn.	=	*Visuddhimagga*

RODERICK S. BUCKNELL

Reinterpreting the *Jhānas*

The *jhānas*, the stages of progressively deepening concentration that figure so prominently in Buddhist meditation theory, have recently been the subject of several excellent critical studies.[1]

Two such studies, those of Griffiths (1983) and Stuart-Fox (1989), have drawn attention to one problem in particular that is demonstrably crucial in any attempt to understand the *jhāna* series. It has to do with the composition of the first *jhāna*. The Pāli Abhidhamma and classical meditation manuals; and with them most present-day accounts of Theravādin meditation theory, consistently state that the first *jhāna* has mental onepointedness (*cittass' ekaggatā*) as one of its component "factors." Yet the description which appears repeatedly in the first four Nikāyas (and which, therefore, certainly antedates the Abhidhamma version) states that mental onepointedness becomes established in the second *jhāna*, not in the first. Stuart-Fox, who discusses this matter in detail, concludes that the Abhidhamma description of the first *jhāna* is a secondary development, a result of scholastic editing of the earlier Nikāya account.

Both Griffiths (briefly and in passing) and Stuart-Fox (at length and explicitly) draw another closely related conclusion regarding the composition of the first *jhāna* as described in the Nikāyas: *vitakka-vicāra*,

1. See in particular Martin Stuart-Fox, "*Jhāna* and Buddhist Scholasticism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12.2 (1989): 79-110; and Paul Griffiths, "Buddhist Jhāna: A form-critical study," *Religion* 13 (1983): 55-68. Also relevant are Winston L. King, *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980) (esp. Chapters 3-6); and Johannes Bronkhorst, *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien 28 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1986). Such critical studies contrast with the largely uncritical, though very thorough and useful, descriptive account by Henepola Gunaratana, *The Path of Serenity and Insight* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985). The present paper was presented in much abbreviated form to the International Congress on Religion, Melbourne, July 1992.

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the factor that particularly characterizes the first *jhāna*, is probably nothing other than the normal process of discursive thought, the familiar but usually unnoticed stream of mental imagery and verbalization.[2]

These conclusions conflict with the widespread conception of the first *jhāna* as a state of deep concentration, a profoundly altered state of consciousness attainable only after long and arduous practice.[3] They can be shown also to challenge some long-held notions about the *jhāna* series as a whole. To investigate the further implications of this revised understanding of the first *jhāna* is a major objective of the present study.

As to method, this study employs the kind of text-critical approach adopted by Griffiths and Stuart-Fox, while also taking into account what is known of the practical-experiential side of *jhāna* meditation. It carefully distinguishes the earliest account of *jhāna*, found throughout the Nikāyas, from the historically later versions found in some late *suttas*, the Abhidhamma, and Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*. Indeed, one of its specific aims is to clarify the relationship between the earlier and later accounts.

The inclusion of meditative experience among the data to be used in the interpretive process raises some difficult methodological issues.[4] For present purposes the central problem is that scholars who are non-meditators, and who are therefore in no position to check the accuracy of accounts of meditative experience, are naturally inclined to have reservations about interpretive procedures that draw on such accounts. Adequate discussion of this and related methodological issues is clearly beyond the scope of this paper, so it must suffice here to make just the following point. In the present case the account of meditative experience in question is shown to agree substantially with the relevant description given by Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga*—a situation that should minimize possible concern on the part of non-meditator scholars.

Whereas previous studies have focused on the first two *jhāna*s, the present analysis covers the entire series, comprising the four basic

2. Griffiths 59-60; Stuart-Fox 81-82 and *passim*.
3. For a typical example of that conception, see Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, *Ānāpānasati* (Mindfulness of Breathing), trans. Bhikkhu Nagasena, (Bangkok: Sublime Life Mission, 1976). The first 153 pages of Buddhadasa's book are devoted to the practicalities of attaining the first *jhāna*.
4. Some of the methodological issues raised in this paragraph are noted briefly by Stuart-Fox 94-96. The field of Buddhist Studies will eventually have to come to terms with such issues if it is ever to do justice to meditation.

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*jhāna*s (called, in the Abhidhamma and *Visuddhimagga*, *rūpa-jhāna*s, "material *jhāna*s") and the four *āruppa*s (*arūpa-jhāna*s, "non-material *jhāna*s").[5] For convenience, the separate *jhāna*s are henceforth referred to as "*jhāna* 1," "*jhāna* 2," and so on up to "*jhāna* 8" (*neva saññā nāsaññāyatana*).[6] The Nikāya account is examined first, followed by Buddhaghosa's more elaborate version. The two are then considered in the light of meditative experience. Finally, conclusions are drawn regarding the relationship between the two versions, and regarding the identities of the various stages in terms of meditative practices and attainments. These conclusions are seen as indicating a need to revise some long-established ideas about the *jhāna*s.

Analysis of yhe Nikāya Account

The often repeated *jhāna* formula or "pericope" may be provisionally, and rather literally, translated as follows.[7]

5. All eight are listed at, e. g., M i 40-41; the first four alone (i. e. the *rūpa-jhāna*s) are listed at, e. g., D i 73-75. (All such source references are to volume and page numbers in the Pali Text Society's editions of the Pāli texts. D = Dīgha Nikāya, etc.; Vism = Visuddhimagga; Vibh = Vibhaṅga.) Griffiths states (57) that the shorter listing occurs at least 86 times in the first four Nikāyas. Because the *āruppa*s are often omitted from textual accounts, some investigators have suggested that they were not part of the Buddha's original teaching; e. g. Friedrich Heiler, *Die Buddhistische Versenkung* (München: Reinhardt, 1922) 47-51; King 14-15; and Bronkhorst 82-86. That debate is not pursued here. Instead, the *jhāna*s, *rūpa* and *arūpa*, are considered together, as they are in many *suttas*, as constituting a single series.
6. Cf. Amadeo Solé-Leris, *Tranquillity and Insight* (Boston: Shambhala, 1986) 68-71, where essentially the same nomenclature is adopted.
7. The Pāli reads: 1) *vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* 2) *vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* 3) *pītiyā ca virāgā upekhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti yan taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti upekhako satimā sukhavihāri ti tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* 4) *sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthagamā adukkhaṃ asukhaṃ upekhāsatipārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* 5) *sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭighasaññānaṃ atthagamā nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā ananto ākāso ti ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.* 6) *sabbaso ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma anantaṃ viññāṇan ti viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.* 7) *sabbaso viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma natthi kiñci ti ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.* 8) *sabbaso ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

Jhāna 1: Quite separated from sense desires, separated from unwholesome mental states, he [the meditator] attains and abides in the first *jhāna*, in which are present initial thought (*vitakka*), sustained thought (*vicāra*), and separation-born zest (*pīti*) and pleasure (*sukha*).

Jhāna 2: Through the suppression of initial thought and sustained thought, he attains and abides in the second *jhāna*, in which there is inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, and in which initial thought and sustained thought are absent, and concentration-born zest and pleasure are present.

Jhāna 3: Through the fading away of zest, he abides equanimous, mindful and discerning; and experiencing pleasure with the body, he attains and abides in the third *jhāna*, of which the Noble Ones say "equanimous, mindful, abiding in pleasure."

Jhāna 4: Through the relinquishing of pleasure, through the relinquishing of pain, through the previous disappearance of happiness and sorrow, he attains and abides in the fourth *jhāna*, in which pleasure and pain are absent, and the purity of equanimity and mindfulness is present.

Jhāna 5: Through the complete transcending of material perceptions, through the disappearance of impact-perceptions, through non-attention to variety-perceptions, [aware] that space is endless, he attains and abides in the realm of endless space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*).

Jhāna 6: Through the complete transcending of the realm of endless space, [aware] that consciousness is endless, he attains and abides in the realm of endless consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*).

Jhāna 7: Through the complete transcending of the realm of endless consciousness, [aware] that there is nothing, he attains and abides in the realm of nothingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*).

Jhāna 8: Through the complete transcending of the realm of nothingness, he attains and abides in the realm of neither perception nor non-perception (*n'eva saññā nāsaññāyatana*).

This translation is tentative and subject to later revision, particularly in respect of the major technical terms. Some of the renderings adopted are based simply on common western usage, for want of more adequate criteria at this early stage in the investigation. For example, *pīti* is provisionally given as "zest" because that word is often preferred in English translations. There are also some syntactic ambiguities in the Pāli, which will be addressed as the analysis proceeds.

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The above standard description of the *jhāna*s will now be examined critically within a purely linguistic-textual-doctrinal framework, i. e. without at this stage making any attempt to link it to meditative practice. Since it is the Nikāya description that is in question, the later interpretations and explanations found in the Abhidhamma and the *Visuddhimagga* will be referred to only sparingly and with caution. Attention focuses first on the four *rūpa-jhāna*s (*jhāna*s 1 to 4).

Each of the first four paragraphs consists essentially in a statement of (a) the mental factors that are present or absent in each *jhāna*, and (b) the factors that are developed or eliminated in making the transition to that *jhāna* from the one preceding it. The mental condition of the monk or meditator before beginning the *jhāna* practice is not described directly. Indirectly, however, the account does indicate that this pre-*jhāna* condition is characterized by the presence of sense desires (kāma) and other unwholesome mental states (*akusala dhamma*s), for it is by becoming separated or isolated (*vivicca*) from these that the meditator attains *jhāna* 1.

It is stated that in *jhāna* 1 there exist initial thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*), together with zest (*pīti*) and pleasure (*sukha*), both of which are "separation-born" (*viveka-ja*).[8] The adjective "separation-born" amounts to a reiteration of the statement that the meditator attains this *jhāna* through becoming separated (*vivicca*)—i. e. separated from sense desires and unwholesome states. Its application to "zest" and "pleasure" (which immediately follow it in the sentence) and not to "initial thought" and "sustained thought" (which immediately precede it) indicates that it is above all this separation, with resulting zest and pleasure, that distinguishes *jhāna* 1 from the pre-*jhāna* condition. It indicates that the presence of initial and sustained thought in *jhāna* 1 is not a consequence of the separation from sense desires and unwholesome states; that is, initial and sustained thought are present already in the pre-*jhāna* condition and merely persist through the transition. The essence of the transition from normal consciousness to *jhāna* 1 consists,

8. Buddhaghosa suggests that *viveka-jaṃ* can be seen as qualifying either *pītisukhaṃ* or *jhānaṃ* (Vism 145). I follow the former interpretation, as do Ñāṇamoli and many others. See Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)* (Berkeley & London: Shambhala, 1976) 151. (Ñāṇamoli's translation is hereafter denoted *Path.*)

therefore, in (a) the elimination of sense desires and other unwholesome states, and (b) the arising of zest and pleasure.[9]

The transition from *jhāna* 1 to *jhāna* 2 is achieved through the suppression or stilling (*vūpasamā*) of initial and sustained thought, and the establishing of inner tranquillity (*ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ*) and oneness of mind (*cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ*). This is reiterated in the statement that *jhāna* 2 is without initial thought and sustained thought (*avitakka, avicāra*). Zest and pleasure, already established in the preceding *jhāna*, are still present but are now described as "concentration-born" (*samādhi-ja*). "Concentration," "inner tranquillity," and "oneness of mind" are evidently synonyms.[10] The essence of the transition to *jhāna* 2 is, then, the elimination of initial and sustained thought and the establishing of concentration.

The transition to *jhāna* 3 comes about through the fading away of zest (*piti*), as the meditator becomes equanimous or conatively neutral (*upekhako* or *upekkhako*) and also mindful and self-possessed (*sato, sampajāno*). Pleasure continues, but is now, for the first time, said to be experienced *with the body* (*kāyena*). As Gunaratana points out, the term "*upekkhā*," though having many different applications, always signifies a midpoint or point of neutrality between extremes.[11] In the present case the reference is clearly to neutrality in the domain of conation, i. e. to a

9. The vague rendering "states" for *dhammehi* sidesteps the question which of the many meanings of *dhamma* is intended here. One important meaning of *dhamma* is "mental object" or "mental image," and this could well be the meaning intended in the present context. (See T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary* (London: Luzac, 1959) 336, *dhamma*.) If it is, then the factors said to be eliminated in the transition from ordinary consciousness to *jhāna* 1 are sense desires and unwholesome images. This would explain what otherwise appears an unnecessary repetition; for "*vivicc' eva kāmehi, vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*" would then be referring to two different mental elements. (In Table 1 they would be in two different columns, "Conation" (kāmas) and "Thought" (*akusaladhammas*), rather than in the same column as shown.) A further implication would be that the *vitakka-vicāra* of *jhāna* 1, being free of unwholesome thoughts, does after all differ from the normal flow of thought.

10. *Cetaso ekodibhāva* is equated at Vibh 258 with *cittassa ṭhiti* (steadiness of mind) and *sammāsamādhi* (right concentration); it is defined in the *Pali-English Dictionary* (160) as "concentration, fixing one's mind on one point." The term's equivalence with *cittass' ekaggatā* is self-evident. *Sampasādana* is explained at Vibh 258 as "*saddhā* (faith, confidence)"; the *Pali-English Dictionary* definition is "tranquilizing" (692). Gunaratana (83) notes these two meanings, "confidence" and "tranquillity," and opts for the former, though the latter is clearly more appropriate in the context.

11. Gunaratana 88-90. Cf. Vism 160-161; *Path* 166-167.

state of affective detachment. The meditator becomes *upekhako* through the disappearance of *piti*, a conative factor (placed under *saṅkhāra-khandha* in the Abhidhamma classification).[12] Thus, the essence of the transition from *jhāna* 2 to *jhāna* 3 is the replacement of *piti* (zest?) by the conatively neutral *sati-sampajañña* (mindfulness and self-possession). That the pleasure (*sukha*) is now explicitly physical appears to represent another significant development.

In the transition to *jhāna* 4, pleasure (*sukha*) is relinquished or allowed to disappear. The description states that pain (*dukkha*) disappears also, though it was not mentioned as present in earlier *jhāna*s. Since *jhāna*s 1, 2, and 3 are all described as pleasurable, this disappearance of pain makes sense only if understood as having been entailed in the establishing of *jhāna* 1. Such a meaning is the more likely because the next two factors mentioned, happiness (*somanassa*) and sorrow (*domanassa*), are explicitly stated to have disappeared *previously* or *earlier* (*pubbeva*).

As Gunaratana points out, analysis of the description is complicated by the existence of two different Nikāya usages of the terms *sukha* and *dukkha*:[13]

First usage:	*sukha*:	physical and mental pleasure
	dukkha:	physical and mental pain
Second usage:	*sukha*:	physical pleasure
	dukkha:	physical pain
	somanassa:	mental pleasure (happiness)
	domanassa:	mental pain (sorrow)

In the description of *jhāna* 4 all four terms occur, whence it is clear that the second usage is being followed. Thus the *sukha* that is relinquished in attaining *jhāna* 4 is physical or bodily pleasure, which is in keeping with the fact that the *sukha* present in *jhāna* 3 is experienced "with the body." The description is not explicit regarding the type of *sukha* present in *jhāna*s 1 and 2.

In the final string of adjectives describing *jhāna* 4, the pair *asukham adukkham* (without pleasure, without pain) is followed by *upekkhā-sati-*

12. Gunaratana 60, 91.

13. Gunaratana 62-63.

pārisuddhiṃ (having purity of equanimity and mindfulness).[14] Since *upekkhā* and *sati* were already present in the preceding *jhāna*, the addition of the word *pārisuddhiṃ* ("purity") evidently signifies that *upekkhā* and *sati* are now no longer associated with *sukha*; that is, *pārisuddhi* signifies absence of *sukha*, just as (in *jhāna* 3) *upekkhā* signifies absence of *piti*.

The account of the four *rūpa-jhānas* exhibits a stylistic feature typical of the Pāli canon in general: frequent reiteration through the use of synonyms and (in negations) antonyms. For example, the statement that *jhāna* 2 is attained through suppression of initial thought and sustained thought (*vitakka-vicārānaṃ vūpasamā*) is reiterated in the further statements that that *jhāna* is without initial and sustained thought (*avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ*), that it is characterized by inner tranquillity (*ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ*) and oneness of mind (*cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ*), and that the associated zest and pleasure are born of concentration (*samādhijaṃ*). Accordingly the above analysis has, in large part, consisted in identifying such sets of synonyms and antonyms, a procedure that greatly simplifies the description.

It will be helpful at this point to depict the results of the analysis diagrammatically. This is done in Table 1. Each transition between *jhānas* is represented by a downward-pointing arrow, and the factors responsible for the transition are indicated by the boxed terms attached to the arrow.

Table 1 draws attention to some further characteristics of the *jhāna* description. One evident characteristic is inconsistency in mentioning the continued existence of a factor in *jhānas* subsequent to the one in which that factor first becomes established. For example, equanimity (*upekkhā*), which becomes established in *jhāna* 3, is stated to be present also in *jhāna* 4. On the other hand, the quality "without initial and sustained thought" (*avitakkaṃ, avicāraṃ*)—otherwise "having tranquillity" (*sampasādanaṃ*), and "having oneness of mind" (*cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ*) —which is attributed to *jhāna* 2, is not similarly applied to *jhānas* 3 and

14. This seems more likely to be the meaning of the compound than "having mindfulness purified by equanimity," because *upekkhā* (equanimity) was already present in *jhāna* 3. However, cf. *Path* 174; Vism 167-168; Vibh 261.

4, though it is clearly to be understood to apply to them, and indeed always has been by commentators classical and modern.[15]

Another characteristic evident in Table 1 is that the composition of the *rūpa-jhānas* is specified in terms of three implicit categories. This has been emphasized by providing the three relevant columns with headings: "Thought," "Conation," and "Feeling" (i. e. hedonic tone).

When the above points are taken into account, Table 1 reduces to the much simpler Table 2. In Table 2 we immediately see the *jhāna* series as a process of successively eliminating mental factors. The term below each arrow is functionally the negation of the one above it; e. g. *ekodibhāva* is the negation of *vitakka-vicāra*.[16]

Table 2 can in its turn be simplified by replacing each negating term with a dash, on the understanding that a dash signifies the absence or elimination of the factor immediately above it. The result is the maximally economical representation shown in Table 3.

The terms that appear in Table 3 are the first four of the familiar five "*jhāna* factors" (*jhānaṅgāni*): *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *piti*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā*. The practice of summarizing the composition of the *jhānas* by listing the relevant *jhāna* factors appears sporadically in a few late *suttas*, and becomes well established in the Abhidhamma.[17] The odd development whereby the factor *ekaggatā* (= *ekodibhāva*) came to be attributed to *jhāna* 1 is among the problems dealt with by Stuart-Fox.

The analysis can now move on to the *arūpa-jhānas*, the non-material *jhānas*. The first of these (in our terminology, *jhāna* 5) is the realm of endless space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*). It is attained "through the complete transcending of material perceptions (*rūpa-saññā*), through the disappearance of impact-perceptions (*paṭigha-saññā*), through non-attention to variety-perceptions" (*nānatta-saññā*), and it entails the awareness that "space is endless" (*anaṇto ākāso*).

Of the three terms ending in *-saññā*, the first, *rūpa-saññā*, is familiar as denoting perception of visual forms, the first of six recognized classes

15. Cf. Buddhadasa 158: ". . . it should be understood that anything discarded in a lower stage remains absent in higher stages and is therefore not mentioned again."

16. In choosing such negative terms for inclusion in Table 2, I have intentionally avoided the visually self-evident ones (e. g. *avitakka* as the negation of *vitakka*) in order to make the diagram maximally informative. That *ekodibhāva* is the negation of *vitakka-vicāra* is not immediately apparent and therefore worth stating explicitly.

17. In the *suttas* it appears (with *ekaggatā* included) at M i 294, M iii 25-29, S iv 263. See Stuart-Fox 85 ff.

of sense perception.[18] However, in the present context it clearly has a wider scope, justifying the usual translation "material perceptions" or "perceptions of matter."[19] (Buddhaghosa explains it as perceptions of the *rūpa-jhānas* and of their objects—presumably the *kasiṇa* disks, the breathing, etc.)[20] This ambiguity of *rūpa-saññā* corresponds to an ambiguity in the word *rūpa*: *rūpa* is sometimes "visible form" (the object of visual perception) and sometimes "matter, materiality" (as when contrasted with *nāma* or with *arūpa*).[21] In the present context, then, *rūpa-saññā* covers all but the sixth class of *saññā*, i. e. all but *dhamma-saññā*, the type that has mental images (*dhammas*) as its objects.

The second of the three terms, *paṭigha-saññā* ("impact-perception"), is explained in the *Vibhaṅga* as denoting perceptions of visual forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and tangible objects.[22] This indicates that *paṭigha-saññā* is identical with the preceding item, *rūpa-saññā*. The third term, *nānatta-saññā*, ("variety-perception") contains in its literal meaning little indication just what type of perception is being referred to. However, the pattern established by *rūpa-saññā* and *paṭigha-saññā* makes it likely that *nānatta-saññā* is a further synonym, i. e. that it too signifies "sense-perception," an interpretation explicitly affirmed by Buddhaghosa.[23]

18. The six are: *rūpa-saññā, sadda-, gandha-, rasa-, phoṭṭhabba-, dhamma-saññā*. See D ii 309 and S iii 60.
19. See *Path* 356, and many other translations of the *jhāna* description.
20. Vism 328; *Path* 356-357.
21. See *Pali-English Dictionary* 574-575, *rūpa*, 1 and 2.
22. Vibh 261. See also Vibh 6 and D ii 62, where *paṭigha-samphassa* is contrasted with *adhivacana-samphassa* "verbal (or conceptual, i. e. mental) impression." (Definition from Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary* [Colombo: Frewin and Co., 1972] 142.) The *Vibhaṅga*'s explanations of *rūpa-saññā* and *nānatta-saññā* are uninformative.
23. In such a succession of parallel terms we may expect *either* that all have the same meaning (appositional relationship) *or* that all have different meanings (additive relationship). Clearly the former applies here. (An example of the latter occurs at the beginning of the *jhāna* 4 formula.) Buddhaghosa's support for this interpretation of *nānatta-saññā* comes in the following statement. "'Through the disappearance of impact-perceptions, through non-attention to variety-perceptions': by this is meant the relinquishing of and non-attention to all sense-sphere consciousness and its concomitants" (Vism 331). Buddhaghosa implausibly also states that such perceptions were already abandoned in *jhāna* 1 (Vism 329-330)—evidently in an attempt to reconcile the Nikāya account of the *jhānas* (which he professes to be explicating) with the Abhidhamma understanding of *jhāna* 1.

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We therefore have here a thrice uttered statement that the transition from *jhāna* 4 to *jhāna* 5 entails the cessation of physical sense perceptions. It is appropriate that this cessation of physical or material perception (*rūpa-/paṭigha-/nānatta-saññā*) coincides with the transition out of the physical or material (*rūpa*) *jhānas*. The first *arūpa-jhāna* (*jhāna* 5) can, therefore, be readily incorporated into the condensed table of the *jhānas* by adding a further column, headed "Sense Perception" (see Table 4).

Jhāna 5 is further characterized by the awareness or realization that "Space (*ākāsa*) is endless." In the Nikāyas, *ākāsa* is occasionally appended to the list of four elements or *mahābhūtas*, and in later times it assumes the status of a fifth element.[24] The four—earth, water, fire, and air—are together equated with *rūpa*, i. e. materiality or physicality, sometimes more specifically the human body. *Ākāsa* is what remains when these four are removed. Thus the awareness that "*ākāsa* is endless" amounts to the awareness that "*rūpa* is non-existent"; and this again is an appropriate concomitant to the transition from the material or *rūpa jhānas* to the non-material or *arūpa jhānas*. The contrast between *rūpa* as earth, water, fire, and air, and *arūpa* as the realms of endless space, endless consciousness, etc., is apparent in the well known *Udāna* passage: "There exists, monks, a realm in which there is not earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor realm of endless space, nor realm of endless consciousness, nor realm of nothingness, nor realm of neither perception nor non-perception . . .."[25]

The transition to *jhāna* 6, the realm of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), is achieved by transcending the realm of endless space and realizing that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is endless. The type of analysis applied in earlier *jhānas* is hardly applicable here. By this stage in the series the information given has become so meager that nothing remains to be considered except the significance of the term *viññāṇa*.

24. In the Nikāyas the set of four elements occurs frequently, e. g. at D i 55, M i 53; the set of five occurs only rarely, e. g. at M i 413, S iii 227. On the seemingly late addition of *ākāsa*, see G. P. Malalasekera, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, vol. 1 (Colombo: Government of Ceylon, 1966) 341.
25. Udāna 80. *atthi bhikkhave tad āyatanaṃ yattha neva paṭhavi na āpo na tejo na vāyo na ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ na viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ na ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ na nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatanaṃ . . ..* See the *Vibhaṅga* analysis of *jhāna* 5, which explains that *ākāsa* is "untouched by the four primary elements, *asamphuṭṭhaṃ catūhi mahābhūtehi*" (Vibh 262).

That is itself a daunting problem, discussion of which will be deferred until later in the paper.

The situation becomes even more difficult with the two remaining *jhāna*s, the realm of nothingness and the realm of neither perception nor non-perception, each of which is attained by "transcending" the realm that precedes it. The possibilities of the text-analytical approach, as it can be applied to the Nikāya account, have, therefore, been exhausted for the present. Accordingly, we now turn to other sources, sources that provide information on the techniques and experiences associated with attaining the *jhāna*s in practice.

The Nikāya account of the *jhāna*s provides little information for the practicing meditator. *Sutta*s such as the *Ānāpāna-sati Sutta* do give some guidance; however, the standard source of practical information is the post-canonical manuals, particularly Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (5th century CE), to which we now turn.

Analysis of Buddhaghosa's Account

The description of *jhāna* practice that Buddhaghosa presents in his *Visuddhimagga* is widely regarded, rightly or wrongly, as authoritative on Theravādin meditation. It undoubtedly represents an already well established tradition, for essentially the same description is found in the less well known *Vimuttimagga* of Upatissa, dated a few centuries earlier.[26] (I shall nevertheless, for convenience, refer to this description as "Buddhaghosa's.") Buddhaghosa's account has been largely responsible for the widespread understanding of *jhāna* 1 as a state of deep concentration. In it he indicates that attainment of *jhāna* 1 entails a long and difficult progression through a series of sub-stages, of which the more advanced clearly do involve deep concentration. His portrayal of *jhāna* 1 as a deeply concentrated state therefore affirms the Abhidhamma account (which ascribes *ekaggatā* to *jhāna* 1), while conflicting with the earlier Nikāya account.

The task of sorting out the relationship between these two accounts, and discovering how the differences may have come about, has already been tackled in a preliminary way by Griffiths and Stuart-Fox. Here it will be dealt with more thoroughly, by first considering certain problems that arise out of the series of sub-stages which Buddhaghosa describes

26. *Vimuttimagga* of Upatissa (Taishō 1648), transl. by N. R. M. Ehara, Soma Thera, and Kheminda Thera as *The Path of Freedom* (Colombo: D. Roland D. Weerasuria, 1961).

as leading up to *jhāna* 1 (and to each subsequent *jhāna*.) This series is not mentioned in the Nikāyas, nor even in the canonical Abhidhamma texts. Its appearance in the post-canonical *Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhimagga* is evidently associated with the revision whereby *ekaggatā* was ascribed to *jhāna* 1. Consequently, any elucidation of the significance of Buddhaghosa's sub-stages may be expected to contribute to an improved understanding of the entire *jhāna* series. To that end a summary of Buddhaghosa's account is now provided.[27]

In the example given by Buddhaghosa the meditation object is a specially prepared "earth *kasiṇa*," a disk of clay about two spans in diameter. The meditating monk begins by gazing with concentrated attention at this disk, which therefore serves as the "preliminary sign" (*parikamma-nimitta*). After long and persistent effort, he becomes able not only to keep his attention firmly fixed on the disk itself, but also to retain an accurate mental image of it, i. e. to "see" inwardly a clear mental replica of the disk when he closes his eyes. This replica image is the "acquired sign" (*uggaha-nimitta*). The monk thereafter gives up gazing at the original disk and concentrates on the replica image instead. Through this exercise the replica image is progressively stabilized and reinforced until eventually it gives way to a different type of image, the "counterpart sign" (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*). This is an abstract derivative of the preceding image, bearing a general resemblance to it but lacking its "faults" and its specific identifying features. Whereas the acquired sign was a near-perfect mental replica of the original clay disk, the counterpart sign is likely to appear as a pure disk of light, for example resembling the full moon or a well polished mirror. The meditator now focuses on this counterpart sign, seeking to "extend" it progressively. This exercise is carried out in two stages: "access concentration" (*upacāra-samādhi*) and "fixed concentration" (*appanā-samādhi*). With the perfection of *appanā-samādhi*, the meditator attains the first *jhāna*.

Once he has fully mastered these practices, the meditator may go on to develop the second *jhāna*. This entails, according to Buddhaghosa, the same series of sub-stages, but preceded by practice of five "masteries" (*vasi*). These include reflection on the grossness and undesirability of the *jhāna* factor to be eliminated next, which in this case is *vitakka* (Buddhaghosa here follows the Abhidhamma division of *jhāna* 1 into two separate *jhāna*s: *vitakka* and *vicāra* are eliminated successively.)

27. The summary is based on Vism 118-155; *Path* 122-161. Also, cf. *Vimuttimagga* (Ehara et al.) 71-92.

Much the same procedure applies for each of the remaining *jhānas* in turn. Thus, for every one of the *jhānas*, *rūpa* and *arūpa*, the meditator passes through the same series of sub-stages: concentration on the chosen physical object (*parikamma-nimitta*), development of the acquired sign (*uggaha-nimitta*), development of the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*), access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), and finally fixed concentration (*appanā-samādhi*). On each occasion, the perfection of *appanā-samādhi* marks attainment of the relevant *jhāna*.

It can be fairly readily confirmed that Buddhaghosa's account is generally accurate as a description of the meditative practice. Numerous practicing meditators, particularly in the Buddhist countries of southeast Asia, routinely experience many of the stages Buddhaghosa describes. They are well able—though not always very willing—to discuss the process as far as they have experienced it.[28] Such meditators and their teachers do not necessarily use Buddhaghosa's terminology; however, some of the stages they describe can be readily recognized and correlated with his account. In particular, a sequence of three meditation objects—the original physical object, a replica image of it, and an abstract image derived from the replica image—is well attested. And for competent meditators the process culminates in attainment of an imageless state barely distinguishable from total unconsciousness, which masters identify as "entry into *jhāna*."[29]

Researchers wishing to investigate the matter at first hand can do so by taking up intensive meditation themselves. Such experimentation will support the claim that all meditators pass through essentially the same sequence of stages, provided they pursue the practice intensively and persistently enough, in a suitable environment, and with competent guidance.[30] That *kasiṇa* disks are rarely if ever used nowadays is unimportant, because the sequence is largely the same, whether the concentration object is a clay disk, a chanted mantra, or the sensation of the breath at the nostril. (Details are given in the next section.) Buddhaghosa's account therefore deserves acceptance as a reliable description of the stages in *jhāna* practice as far as the attainment of what he calls "the first *jhāna*."

However, as an *interpretation* of those stages in terms of Buddhist doctrine, Buddhaghosa's account presents several problems. One obvious problem has to do with the above-noted question concerning the nature of the first *jhāna*. Development of a stable mental image as the object of concentration—whether a replica image (*uggaha-nimitta*) or an abstract derived image (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*)—implies well established mental onepointedness. The final stage, *appanā-samādhi* (which Buddhaghosa identifies with *jhāna* 1—subsequently also *jhāna* 2, etc.) is portrayed as an even more advanced stage of samādhi. It follows that Buddhaghosa's account is in conflict with the Nikāya account; because, as the Stuart-Fox study makes clear, the *jhāna* 1 of the Nikāya account is a rather preliminary stage in which mental onepointedness has not yet been established. The condition attained by the meditator who has mastered *appanā-samādhi* cannot be identical with the stage which the Nikāyas call "the first *jhāna*" (*paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ*).

It could be suggested, in Buddhaghosa's defense, that perfect correspondence is not to be expected: in his account of *kasiṇa* meditation Buddhaghosa is referring to the first *jhāna* of the Abhidhamma, not the first *jhāna* of the Nikāyas. (The Abhidhamma version states that the first *jhāna* has mental onepointedness as a factor; the Nikāya version does not.) But such an argument would carry no weight, because Buddhaghosa understands the Abhidhamma and Nikāya descriptions of "the first *jhāna*" to be referring to one and the same meditative attainment. He maintains that the verbal discrepancies between the two descriptions are of no consequence, but merely reflect differing perceptions about what was worth mentioning.[31]

28. A major difficulty in finding out about meditation practice is that meditators are often very reticent about discussing their experiences and attainments. Such reticence is usually enjoined by their meditation masters on various grounds, e. g. that to talk about one's attainments could generate conceit and thereby hinder one's further progress. However, for alternative views on this question see Winston L. King, "A Comparison of Theravada and Zen Meditational Methods and Goals," *History of Religions* 9 (1970): 313; and Rod Bucknell, "Experiments in Insight Meditation," *The Australian Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 3.2 (1983): 115.

29. Regarding these practical details, I am drawing particularly on a series of verbal communications with the late Chaokhun Rajasiddhimuni, formerly meditation master at Khana 5, Wat Mahathat, Bangkok. Though the style of meditation he taught was purported to be *vipassanā-bhāvanā*, insight meditation (in the Mahasi Sayadaw tradition), it entailed a large component of *samatha-bhāvanā*, concentration meditation.

30. Such claims entail certain problems, on which see Frank J. Hoffman, *Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987) 98.

31. On the question whether *ekaggatā* was worth mentioning as a factor in *jhāna* 1, see the suggestions by Gunaratana, 67 and 84, and the refutation of them by Stuart-Fox, 88.

Another problem with Buddhaghosa's account is that such details as the *uggaha-* and *paṭibhāga-nimittas*, and *upacāra-* and *appanā-samādhi* are nowhere explicitly mentioned in the Nikāyas. There is not even any indication in the Nikāyas that attainment of *jhāna* 1 entails a lengthy sequence of sub-stages such as Buddhaghosa describes. This raises questions concerning the transmission of the teaching. If this very basic information is genuine, why was it not recorded in the Nikāyas? And how did commentators like Upatissa and Buddhaghosa manage to come by it?

It is now evident that the interpretation implicit in Buddhaghosa's account of *kasiṇa* meditation is problematic. As a *description*, Buddhaghosa's account of the sequence of meditative stages as far as *appanā-samādhi* appears to be accurate; it corresponds with meditative experience. However, as an *interpretation*, it is demonstrably in conflict with the Nikāya account.

We therefore confront the question: How does Buddhaghosa's description, with its detailed series of sub-stages, relate to the much simpler Nikāya account of the *jhānas*? This question will be approached initially by considering in greater detail the techniques and experiences actually involved in the practice of *jhāna* meditation.

The Practice of Concentration

Kasiṇa disks are rarely, if ever, used by present day meditators. The account that follows therefore describes, instead, the practice of mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna-sati*), which is probably the most widely used, and certainly the best documented, Buddhist technique for *jhāna*.[32] The description is based on the standard Theravādin style of practice, but in respect of the resulting experiences and attainments it is probably valid for all styles.

The meditator, having found a quiet spot in which to practice, and having adopted the approved sitting posture, begins by developing an appropriate mental attitude. This may entail reflecting for a few minutes on the value and purpose of the practice he or she is about to undertake, on the virtues of Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha, or on any similarly uplifting topic. Thus prepared, he or she then closes the eyes and begins concentrating on the breathing.

32. For relevant textual sources, see Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānāpānasati)*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1973). For a very detailed discussion of the practice, see Buddhadasa, op. cit. Buddhadasa's monastery (Suan Mok, near Chaiya in southern Thailand) is one of the main centers at which *ānāpāna-sati* is currently taught and practiced on a large scale.

This involves focusing attention on the fine tactile sensation experienced at the rim of one nostril as the breath passes in and out. That sensation is the concentration object. At each sitting attention must be focused on it and restrained from wandering. Invariably, however, attention does wander. After only a few breaths the meditator realizes that instead of concentrating on the sensation at the nostril rim, he or she is involved in a train of thought having no apparent connection with the practice. He or she immediately returns attention to the concentration object and begins again, but before long the same thing happens. Repeatedly, despite all efforts to keep the mind fixed on the concentration object, thoughts arise; and the trains of mental imagery and inner speech sometimes continue for a minute or more before the meditator realizes the digression and is able to cut them short. Only after long and persistent effort—over weeks or months, depending on individual temperament and the intensity of the practice—does success come. Finally, however, the dedicated meditator does succeed in keeping attention fixed on the concentration object for up to a minute without any thoughts intervening.

With further practice the periods of full concentration and freedom from thought grow longer and more intense. The meditator becomes able to sit fully concentrated for several minutes together. With thought totally absent, there is no sense of boredom; the practice, which had formerly seemed dull and tiresome in the extreme, has now become irresistibly interesting.

During this phase of the practice the meditator often finds the body making strange involuntary movements, for example a pronounced trembling, intermittent jerking, or creeping goose-flesh. The meditation master reassures the student that reactions of this kind are common. They are by-products of the high level of mental energy being developed, and have no importance other than as signs that progress is being made. The meditator must merely note their presence and resume the concentration practice.

Following this advice, the meditator finds that the strange movements do soon cease, and facility in concentration improves accordingly. But now a new effect appears, in the form of various delightful bodily feelings: a feeling of lightness as if the body were floating some distance above the seat, or a pervading warmth as if the body were glowing. The

meditator may find it possible to bring about an intensification of these effects; however, the master warns against this. The pleasant feelings are once again unimportant by-products of the practice; the meditator must merely acknowledge their existence and return to the concentration object.

With further practice the delightful feelings subside in their turn, leaving nothing in consciousness but the concentration object. Formerly faint and barely discernible, the sensation at the nostril rim is now experienced vividly as a zone of intense tactile sensation. There is now nothing else in consciousness. As far as the meditator is concerned the rest of the body is non-existent.

Further prolonged concentration eventually results in a strange transformation of the object. The zone of intense tactile sensation is replaced by a glowing patch of light of similar shape and orientation, experienced inwardly as a vivid mental image. (The eyes remain closed throughout these exercises.) For example, if the zone of sensation at the nostril was experienced as crescent-shaped, the glowing patch of light that takes its place is likely to be similarly crescent-shaped. This abstract image is of variable color, indeed the meditator may find that its color and brightness can to some extent be modified at will. Its size seems indeterminate, there being no other content of consciousness with which it might be compared. Having once developed such an abstract image, the meditator is instructed to adopt it as the new concentration object. At each sitting he or she must begin by concentrating on the breath as usual; but as soon as the abstract image appears, that must be made the concentration object instead. This has the effect of causing the abstract image to arise more rapidly each time, and, once arisen, to become progressively more vivid and stable.

The meditator continues practicing in this way, until one day, without warning, the abstract image suddenly disappears. Thus deprived of the only content of consciousness, the meditator has the sense of confronting an infinite black vacuum. This strange experience may lead to a loss of composure, with a consequent abrupt return to normal consciousness. However, the master gives reassurance and advises the student to cultivate this state of mental emptiness, entering it at every opportunity. In addition, the master advocates prolonging its duration by making a resolution to that effect at the beginning of each meditation session. Following these instructions, the meditator finds that the state of emptiness stabilizes and, as promised, lasts progressively longer.

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In this state of emptiness, as at all previous stages of the practice, the meditator remains conscious of the condition, retaining a detached awareness of the state of zero mental content. However, there eventually comes a time when even this residual consciousness abruptly ceases. The effect is as if the meditator had suddenly gone under total anesthetic, or fallen into deep dreamless sleep. It cannot be said of this state that the meditator *experiences* it; rather, he or she *infers* it after the event, perhaps by referring to a clock or some other indicator of the passage of time.

It is said that particularly competent meditators develop the ability to sit in this state of unconsciousness for as long as seven days together. Some masters set up the less ambitious goal of twenty-four hours, and tell their students that when they have achieved that they will have gone as far as this style of practice can take them.

The above account, based on mindfulness of breathing, is broadly applicable for all forms of concentration meditation (*samatha-bhāvanā*), though with some variations in detail depending on the type of object used. For example, concentration on the sound of a clock ticking naturally differs in the early stages. (Some meditators find an auditory object easier to concentrate on than a tactile one; others find it more difficult.) The abstract image develops in much the same way as with mindfulness of breathing, though it is likely to be different in appearance, e. g. exhibiting a rhythmic movement in time with the ticking. Thereafter the sequence of events is identical.

A substantial difference from the course of events described above exists in the case of a visual object or a chanted mantra. With a visual object, the meditator begins with the eyes open, but closes them once the object has so imprinted itself on the memory that it can be visualized clearly "in the mind's eye." With a mantra, the meditator begins by repeating the phrase softly, and continues doing so until he or she can "hear" it inwardly after the voice stops. In either case, the mental replica —the image of the visual object or the internalized sound of the mantra —becomes the new concentration object, and in time yields an abstract image as before.

Practice based on a visual object or a mantra therefore differs from practice based on the types of object described earlier (e. g. the breathing) in having a distinct extra stage, that in which the original object is replaced by a mental replica. However, this difference is perhaps more apparent than real. It may well be that concentration on the breathing

does actually give rise to a mental replica of the original tactile sensation; for such a mental replica would naturally be masked by the original sensation, which itself continues. With a visual object, the original sensation can be terminated at any time by shutting the eyes, which makes the replica image clearly distinguishable from it; but one cannot simply stop breathing at will, whence the apparent skipping of one stage. It is the fuller sequence of stages that is presented by Buddhaghosa in his account of the *kasiṇa* practice.

Correlating Doctrine and Practice

Despite the overall correspondence between the above description and Buddhaghosa's account, there are some evident differences. One that deserves mention here has to do with the phenomenon of goose-flesh, trembling, and other involuntary bodily movements, which meditators commonly experience early in the practice. Present day meditation masters identify these effects as *piti*, a component "factor" (*aṅga*) of *jhāna*s 1 and 2. The main basis for this identification is a vivid description given by Buddhaghosa.[33] However, that description occurs not in his account of the sub-stages leading to *jhāna*, but rather in his description of *jhāna* itself.

Before discussing the significance of this discrepancy, let us note the potential usefulness of *piti* as a landmark for correlating the practical sequence of meditative stages with the textual sequence of *jhāna*s. All accounts of the *jhāna*s agree in stating that the *jhāna* factor *piti* is present in *jhāna*s 1 and 2, but ceases with the attainment of *jhāna* 3. If *piti* is correctly identified with the goose-flesh and similar reactions, then the ceasing of those reactions in the course of meditation should correspond to the transition from *jhāna* 2 to *jhāna* 3.

In considering such apparent correspondences, one has to be prepared to put aside long-held notions about the nature of the *jhāna*s. The old understanding of *jhāna* 1 as a deeply concentrated state has already been rendered dubious, and that means that both scholars and meditators now have to be ready to re-think the entire *jhāna* series. In such an enterprise intellectual flexibility is naturally essential.

33. Vism 143-144; *Path* 149-150. Mahasi Sayadaw, *Practical Insight Meditation* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971) 21, gives the following brief description: "There arises also in him rapture [*piti*], causing 'goose-flesh,' falling of tears, tremor in the limbs. It produces in him a subtle thrill and exhilaration: He feels as if on a swing. He even wonders whether he is just giddy."

Another potentially useful landmark for correlating meditative stages with *jhāna*s is provided by the classification of the *jhāna*s into two categories: *rūpa* and *arūpa*, material and non-material. Common sense indicates that this classification would appropriately be applied to the meditative stages as follows: Those stages in which attention is directed to a physical object—the actual *kasiṇa* disk, the breathing, a chanted mantra, etc.—are *rūpa*, material; and those in which it is directed to a mental image, or in which there is no specifiable object at all, are *arūpa*, non-material.[34] On this basis, the arising of the mental replica of the meditation object would mark the transition from *jhāna* 4 (the last *rūpa-jhāna*) to *jhāna* 5 (the first *arūpa-jhāna*).

Here a further conflict with Buddhaghosa's account becomes apparent. We have already noted that one of the earlier sub-stages listed in his account, namely the arising of the *uggaha-nimitta*, clearly corresponds to the arising of the replica image in the meditation practice. Yet now we have grounds for inferring that the transition from *jhāna* 4 to *jhāna* 5 corresponds to that same meditative event. This is another problem that will be deferred until later. For the present, the discussion will focus on possible correspondences between the meditative series and the Nikāya *jhāna* series, independently of any connection with Buddhaghosa's sub-stages.

Two points of correspondence between the meditative series and the *jhāna* series have already been tentatively identified. Application of similar reasoning elsewhere in the two series yields the following tentative pattern of correspondence.

34. Present-day writers on *jhāna* often translate the *rūpa* in *rūpa-jhāna* as "fine-material" (e. g. Gunaratana 108, Nyanaponika 70, 71; contrast Solé-Leris, 57). This addition of "fine," for which there is no textual justification, has evidently been felt necessary because of the seeming inappropriateness of "material" (let alone "physical") to describe the very subtle state that *jhāna* 1 is widely assumed to be. Similar considerations no doubt lie behind the "explanation" (e. g., Gunaratana 92-93, following Vism 163) that the body referred to in *jhāna* 3 (*sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti*) is actually "the mental body," i. e. the mind. When "body" has to be interpreted as meaning "mind," there is clearly something seriously wrong.

Comparison of Meditative Stages and Jhānas

MEDITATIVE STAGES	JHĀNAS
Stage 1: The meditator's efforts at concentrating on the assigned object fail to stop the flow of thought, but do bring a pleasant freedom from affective involvement.	*Jhāna 1*: *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are present, along with *piti* and *sukha*, both of which are born of separation from sense desires and unwholesome states.
Stage 2: The flow of thought ceases, yielding a pleasant stillness. Trembling, gooseflesh, etc. occur.	*Jhāna 2*: *Vitakka* and *vicāra* cease with the attaining of *ekodibhāva*. *Piti* and *sukha* are now samādhi-born.
Stage 3: The trembling, etc. cease, as the power of attention becomes more balanced. Pleasant bodily feelings of warmth etc. are experienced.	*Jhāna 3*: *Piti* ceases, as *upekkhā* and *sati-sampajañña* are established. *Sukha* is now felt with the body.
Stage 4: The pleasant bodily feelings cease. Balanced attention to the concentration object continues.	*Jhāna 4*: *Sukha* ceases, leaving pure *upekkhā* and *sati*.
Stage 5: Physical sensation ceases, giving way to a mental image which is a replica of the original concentration object.	*Jhāna 5*: *Rūpa-/paṭigha-/nānatta-saññā* ceases. There comes the awareness that *ākāsa* is endless.
Stage 6: There develops a derived image, an abstract counterpart of the preceding replica image.	*Jhāna 6*: Endless *ākāsa* is transcended and there comes the awareness that *viññāṇa* is endless.
Stage 7: This abstract image disappears, giving way to mental emptiness, and leaving a sense of being suspended in an endless black vacuum.	*Jhāna 7*: Endless *viññāṇa* is transcended and there comes the awareness that nothing whatever exists.
Stage 8: Even the sense of experiencing mental emptiness ceases, as total unconsciousness supervenes; however, the meditator is aware of this only in retrospect.	*Jhāna 8*: Nothingness is transcended and the realm of neither *saññā* nor non-*saññā* is attained.

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The reasoning behind this proposed pattern of correspondences will now be spelled out by considering, in order of their occurrence, those Pāli terms whose meanings are of significance in defining the different *jhāna*s.

Vitakka-vicāra. The meaning of these paired terms is a key issue in Stuart-Fox's analysis of *jhāna*s 1 and 2. Outside of the *jhāna* context, *vitakka* and *vicāra* together mean, as Rhys Davids and Stede note, "just thought, thinking."[35] The evidence adduced by Stuart-Fox indicates that this is also what they mean in the standard *jhāna* formula as we find it in the Nikāyas: *vitakka-vicāra* simply denotes the normal flow of thought, the stream of imagery and verbalizing which, like a television program that is rarely switched off, provides a persistent though vague and unobtrusive background to our everyday waking consciousness.[36] Rarely noticed under normal circumstances, the thought-stream becomes only too obvious to the meditator when he or she tries to bring it to a halt and keep all attention focused on the concentration object. Indeed, as practitioners of concentration meditation well know, stopping the flow of thought is one of the most difficult aspects of the practice. Success in this task represents a major breakthrough; and the resulting state of prolonged freedom from thought (*cittass' ekaggatā*) constitutes a radically

35. *Pali-English Dictionary* 620, *vitakka*; and 615, *vicāra*.
36. For details see Bucknell, "Experiments . . ." 103-104. The verbalizing or "inner speech" aspect of the thought-stream is stressed in the textual explanation of *vitakka* as *vaci-saṅkhāra*, "speech-activity," or the precursor of actual physical speech (M i 301). It is also recognized in the equating of *jhāna* 2 with "ariyan silence" (S ii 273). Reinterpretation of "*vitakka-vicāra*" as some kind of focused attention was one of the ad hoc adjustments that became necessary once *ekaggatā* had been attributed to *jhāna* 1. For an example of the inconsistencies to which this reinterpretation continues to give rise, see Phra Khantipalo, ed., *A Treasury of the Buddha's Discourses from the Majjhima-nikaya (Middle Collection)*, vol. 2 (Bangkok: Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya Press, n. d.) 62 (translation of *Dantabhūmi-sutta*). There *vitakka* is translated "thoughts" in one sentence ("Do not think thoughts. . ."), and "initial application" in the next sentence (a description of *jhāna*). The editor acknowledges the inconsistency (note 4), but claims it is unavoidable.

altered state of consciousness, a most satisfying and encouraging attainment.

It is, therefore, to be expected that the thought-stream, and the task of suppressing it, should figure prominently in the textual account of *jhāna* practice. This expectation is fulfilled once one allows that *vitakka-vicāra* in the *jhāna* description has the same meaning it has in other more general contexts in the Nikāyas. These various considerations support the identification of *vitakka-vicāra* with the normal flow of thought; the suppression of *vitakka-vicāra* in the transition from *jhāna* 1 to *jhāna* 2 is the meditative achievement of bringing the flow of thought to a standstill.

Piti. The *jhāna* description indicates two different varieties of *piti*: separation-born and concentration-born (*viveka-ja* and *samādhi-ja*).[37] Accordingly, the "Conation" column of Table 1 presents the following series:

pre-*jhāna*:	sense desires and unwholesome states
jhāna 1:	separation-born *piti*
jhāna 2:	concentration-born *piti*
jhāna 3:	equanimous mindfulness and self-possession

Concentration-born *piti*, the phenomenon of trembling, gooseflesh, etc., is easy to identify; and indeed for an experienced meditator, particularly one who has also done some insight meditation, the progression through the entire series is fairly readily perceived, as follows. The practice can begin only if the meditator is able to curb for a time the mind's habit of reacting emotionally to the contents of consciousness, i. e. to external sense objects and mental images. Such affective reaction—endless in its variety but adequately covered by the broad opposing categories "liking" and "disliking"—represents a pointless squandering of the energy that is indispensable for attentive focusing, and thus for the establishing of mental onepointedness. The beginning meditator, struggling to block the flow of thought and keep attention fixed on the prescribed concentration object, applies considerable mental effort, sometimes so much as to cause sweat to stream from the body. This blocking and fixing, once achieved, can be maintained with a much lower level of effort; however, inexperienced meditators usually fail to make the appropriate adjustment. Having achieved onepointedness, they continue to put out the same high level of effort, with the result that the excess manifests in the form of uncontrolled physical movements. With practice, meditators learn to diminish the intensity of the attentive focusing, yielding a state of equilibrium which, because it entails no wasteful loss of energy, can be maintained for long periods.[38]

37. On these two types, cf. Buddhadasa 157, 159.

This view of the process indicates that the relevant *jhāna* terms are to be understood as follows: "Sense desires and unwholesome states" are the varied affective reactions that characterize the pre-*jhāna* condition, i. e. ordinary consciousness. "Separation-born *piti*" is the high-powered attentive focusing on the concentration object which the meditator brings to bear by redeploying the energy normally expended in affective reaction. "Concentration-born *piti*" is the phenomenon whose outward maifestation is physical trembling, etc., and whose cause is the maintaining of this high level of attentive focusing after it is no longer needed, i. e. after onepointedness has been established. And "mindfulness and self-possession" is the condition of balanced attention that is ultimately achieved by reducing the intensity of the focusing and establishing the appropriate equilibrium (*upekkhā*).

Sukha. As noted in the textual analysis, *sukha* is said to be present in *jhāna*s 1, 2, and 3, but is stated to be felt with the body only in *jhāna* 3. This tallies with the meditator's experience of delightful bodily feelings following the cessation of the physical forms of *piti*. In addition it suggests, though not unequivocally, that the *sukha* of *jhāna*s 1 and 2 is to be understood as purely mental pleasure (i. e. *somanassa*). This again is in keeping with experience: freedom from affective involvement (*jhāna* 1) is a pleasurable state of mind, and so too is steady mental onepointedness (*jhāna* 2). It is doubtful, however, if a phenomenological distinction between "separation-born *sukha*" (*jhāna* 1) and "samādhi-born *sukha*" (*jhāna* 2) can really be drawn.

Ākāsa. We have already noted the appropriateness of the term *ākāsa* ("space") in the title of the first *arūpa-jhāna*: space is all that remains following cessation of the four material elements (earth, water, fire, and air), i. e. following the cessation of *rūpa*. "Realm of endless space" is therefore appropriate as a term for the meditative state in which all input

38. If one may invoke a simile worthy of Buddhaghosa, it is like cooking a stew. The cook at first turns the gas up high in order to bring the contents of the pot to boiling point. If, being inexperienced, he leaves the flame high after that point has been reached, the pot boils over. He then learns to turn down the flame to a level just sufficient to maintain a steady simmer. The flame in these three situations corresponds to separation-born *piti* in *jhāna* 1, concentration-born *piti* in *jhāna* 2, and *sati* in *jhāna* 3.

rom the five physical sense organs (*rūpa-saññā/ paṭigha-saññā/ nānatta saññā*) has ceased. For the meditator in this state there exists only the eplica image (*dhamma-saññā*). Here it is well to recall that *ākāsa* is not mptiness or nothingness, a fact emphasized by the contrast with the realm of nothingness" (*jhāna* 7).

Viññāṇa. Given the very incomplete state of research into the actual dentities of Buddhist psychological categories, any attempt at interpreting the term *viññāṇa* in the *jhāna* context is necessarily speculative.[39] Nevertheless, some useful observations are possible, especially as regards the distinction between *viññāṇa* and *saññā*. Buddhaghosa likens *aññā* to a child's perception of a coin (awareness of its color, shape, exture, etc.), and *viññāṇa* to an adult's perception of the same coin awareness of its purchasing power and usefulness).[40] This explanation, if valid, indicates that *viññāṇa* is a processed, more abstract derivative of *saññā*. Such an understanding of the relationship between *saññā* nd *viññāṇa* makes good sense in the case of *jhāna*s 5 and 6, for those wo stages can now be interpreted as follows. The awareness of the eplica image (*jhāna* 5) is an example of the sixth class of *saññā dhamma-saññā*), while the awareness of the derived abstract image *jhāna* 6) is an example of the sixth class of *viññāṇa* (*mano-viññāṇa*).[41] he steady persistence of each type of image, as the only content of the ieditator's consciousness, makes good sense of the phrases "[aware] iat *ākāsa* is endless" (*jhāna* 5) and "[aware] that *viññāṇa* is endless" *ihāna* 6).

Ākiñcaññā. This word, meaning "nothingness," indicates a meditative tate having zero content. The description of *jhāna* 7 includes the statement "*n'atthi kiñci ti*, [aware] that there is nothing," which, like the arallel "*ti*" clauses for *jhāna*s 5 and 6, implies that the meditator is con-

9. For an example of such research, see Rune E. A. Johansson, "Citta, fano, Viññāṇa—a Psychosemantic Investigation," *University of Ceylon eview* 23 (1965): 165-215.

). Vism 436-437; *Path* 480.

1. The six classes of *viññāṇa* are: *cakkhu-viññāṇa, sota-, ghāna-, jivhā-, ya-, mano-viññāṇa*. See D ii 308, S iii 61; and cf. the corresponding six asses of *saññā* at note 18. In many contexts the words *viññāṇa* and *saññā* ppear to be used loosely and almost interchangeably to denote a general, on-specific awareness or consciousness. Examples are the usage of *viññāṇa* M i 293 (cited by Johansson 196), and the seeming interchangeability of *ññāṇa, saññā*, and *vedanā* at M i 293 (Johansson 202). Nevertheless, it is early appropriate to focus on the distinction between *saññā* and *viññāṇa* in e case of *jhāna*s 5 and 6, where the two stand contrasted.

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scious of the condition. This is, therefore, an accurate description of the meditative state in which, following the disappearance of the abstract image, consciousness is empty of all content and the meditator is left only with a sense of an endless void.[42]

Neva saññā nāsaññā. Buddhaghosa states that "neither *saññā* nor non-*saññā*" implies also "neither *vedanā* nor non-*vedanā*," "neither *citta* nor non-*citta*," and "neither *phassa* nor non-*phassa*."[43] If he is right, then the expression "*neva saññā nāsaññā*," though specifying only *saññā*, actually covers all mental components.[44] Now, this expression ("neither *saññā* nor non-*saññā*") has the form of the fourth member of the Indian tetralemma. To the question "Is there *saññā*?" Indian logic allows not only for "There is" and "There is not," but also for "There both is and is not" and "There neither is nor is not." A connection with the meditative practice can now be made. In the eighth and final stage the meditator becomes totally unconscious, but can know this only by inference after the event. Consequently, it can be argued, the presence of consciousness, or of any specified mental factor, can be neither affirmed nor denied. Any question about whether there is consciousness can be answered, strictly speaking, only with "There neither is nor is not." But

42. The question whether consciousness with zero content is possible continues to be debated within the field of mysticism studies. The case against such a state of consciousness (variously called "contentless experience," "pure consciousness," "unmediated consciousness," etc.) is particularly identified with Steven Katz; the case for it has been no less persuasively put by W. T. Stace and others. See, for example, Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism," in Steven T. Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) 22-74; W. T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1960) (esp. 110); Philip C. Almond, *Mystical Experience and Religious Doctrine* (Berlin: Mouton, 1982) (esp. 174-175); and Robert K. C. Forman, "Mysticism, Constructivism, and Forgetting," in Robert K. C. Forman, ed., *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 3-49. Also see Roderick S. Bucknell, "Buddhist *Jhāna* as Mystical Experience," in G. K. Zollschan, J. F. Schumaker, and G. F. Walsh, eds., *Exploring the Paranormal* (Bridport: Prism Press, 1989) 131-149, where (foreshadowing the conclusions reached in the present paper) I identify *jhāna* 7 as contentless experience, and *jhāna* 8 as what one might call contentless non-experience.

43. Vism 337; *Path* 367.

44. The four expressions effectively cover all four mental *khandhas*: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā* (*citta*), and *viññāṇa* (*phassa*). In any case, we have the fact (see note 41) that *saññā* is sometimes used in a very loose sense to refer to any consciousness. Also cf. Nyanaponika 164: "*Saññā* stands sometimes for consciousness in its entirety, e. g., in *neva saññā-nāsaññ' āyatana* . . .."

to non-Indian minds this is philosophical hair-splitting; by generally accepted standards of logicality and phenomenological accuracy, the final meditative stage would be quite correctly described as a state of total unconsciousness. It is therefore noteworthy that there does exist (in the *Poṭṭhapāda-sutta*, belonging to the earliest stratum of the Nikāyas) a single variant version of the account of the eight *jhāna*s in which the eighth stage *is* described straight-forwardly in terms of cessation of *saññā* (*saññā nirujjhanti*).[45]

Implications

The above discussion has shown that the series of eight *jhāna*s described at numerous places in the Nikāyas, correlates well with the series of eight stages experienced by practitioners of concentration meditation. One can hardly escape the conclusion that the eight *jhāna*s *are* the eight meditative stages.

This conclusion has serious implications for Buddhaghosa's series of sub-stages. That series is said to precede attainment of each *jhāna*; but, as already noted, some of the sub-stages appear to be identical with cer-

45. D i 184-5. According to this *sutta*, the monk who has attained the realm of nothingness recognizes that he is at the peak of *saññā*, but that to be without *saññā* would be a still higher attainment. He therefore practices further until he "touches cessation" (*nirodha phusati*). This phrase provides a link with a common variant of the *jhāna* description, according to which *jhāna* 8 is followed by a yet higher attainment wherein the meditator "touches cessation" (e. g. M i 455-456). As described in the texts, this ninth attainment, "cessation of perception and feeling" (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*) or "attainment of cessation" (*nirodha-samāpatti*), tallies well with the state of total unconsciousness already identified with *jhāna* 8. For several good reasons, including its frequent anomalous association with "destruction of the *āsava*s" (e. g. M iii 28), this ninth attainment is under suspicion of being a later addition to what was already a complete list of the stages in concentration meditation—see Paul Griffiths, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem* (La Salle, Ill.: Open court, 1986) 16-31; also Bronkhorst 77-78; and King 17. The evidence, particularly the existence of the *Poṭṭhapāda* version, suggests that the description of *jhāna* 8 and the description of *nirodha-samāpatti*, though usually made to follow each other in accounts of the *jhāna*s, were in origin two alternative descriptions of one and the same meditative attainment. (The Chinese counterpart of the Pāli *Poṭṭhapāda-sutta* [Taishō vol. 1, 110 b 12-16] does recognize a discrete ninth stage, its description being identical in wording with the above-mentioned descriptions of *jhāna* 8 followed by *nirodha-samāpatti*. This discrepancy between the Pāli and Chinese versions of the *Poṭṭhapāda* is most readily explained on the premise that the unique Pāli version preserves the "original," since the Chinese version can then be attributed to editing designed to yield conformity with the stereotype.)

tain of the *jhāna*s. For example, Buddhaghosa's sub-stage characterized by the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* clearly corresponds to the meditative stage in which an abstract image becomes established; and that meditative stage has been shown to correspond also to *jhāna* 6. The first three of Buddhaghosa's sub-stages can be fairly positively equated with *jhāna*s in this way, which points to the pattern of correspondences shown in Table 5.[46] Thus, Buddhaghosa's series of sub-stages duplicates the series of *jhāna*s. What Buddhaghosa portrays as steps on the way to the first *jhāna* (and to each subsequent *jhāna*) are in fact steps on the way to the *last jhāna*.

It is now evident that Buddhaghosa's account is not, as generally supposed, merely a more detailed and precise formulation of the account found throughout the Nikāyas. Rather, it is a fundamentally *different* version which is in serious conflict with the Nikāya account. By Buddhaghosa's day the *jhāna* doctrine had been drastically modified. The first and crucial modification, already introduced, it seems, by the earliest Ābhidhammikas, consisted in equating the final stage of the meditative sequence (i. e. the state of total unconsciousness) with attainment of the first *jhāna* rather than the last (*jhāna* 8). Once this new equation had been set up, two further things became necessary: (1) a set of terms for the meditative stages passed through on the way to this new "first *jhāna*"; and (2) a description of a series of further meditative practices whereby the remaining *jhāna*s could (allegedly) be attained. Accordingly, the new set of terms, *uggaha-nimitta*, etc., was created and brought into association with a practice consisting in systematic reflec-

46. The correspondence shown in Table 5 is less secure for *upacāra-* and *appanā-samādhi* than it is for the three *nimitta*s. It is based in part on the sequence of sub-stages as described in the texts, and that sequence is not entirely clear. The *Vimuttimagga* (79) states: "And if the (after-)image [*paṭibhāga-nimitta*] appears in his mind, he gains access-meditation [*upacāra-samādhi*]. And if access-meditation appears in his mind, he, by means of this, accomplishes fixed meditation [*appanā-samādhi*]." This indicates the sequence: *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, *upacāra-samādhi*, *appanā-samādhi*. The *Visuddhimagga* appears to indicate the same sequence, but with some overlap: ". . . he should besides extend the counterpart sign [*paṭibhāga-nimitta*] . . . for it is possible to extend it on reaching access [*upacāra-samādhi*] and on reaching absorption [*appanā-samādhi*]" (Vism 152). However, at another point (Vism 126) the *Visuddhimagga* refers to ". . . the counterpart sign, which arises together with access concentration [*upacāra-samādhi*] . . .," suggesting that the *paṭibhāga-nimitta* arises simultaneously with *upacāra-samādhi* rather than before it. The resulting slight uncertainty is acknowledged by the query marks in Table 5.

n the need to eliminate the next *jhāna* factor, or (in the case of the *-jhānas*) to move on to the next, more subtle object.

ese developments must have been fairly directly linked with the de- ments discussed by Stuart-Fox, whereby *ekaggatā* was attributed *na* 1, and *vitakka-vicāra* was reinterpreted as some kind of atten- ocusing. Only on the basis of such a revised description of *jhāna* 1 l it have been plausible, and therefore possible, to identify that with a deeply concentrated meditative state. Indeed, it may well be ie seemingly minor step of attributing *ekaggatā* to *jhāna* 1 was initiated the entire process.

it such modification of the *jhāna* doctrine could come about may to raise doubts about the meditative credentials of those responsi- r it; it suggests that the authors of the *Vimuttimagga* and *Visuddhi- a* had little practical acquaintance with meditation. However, this iot necessarily follow, because it is only the *interpretation* of the doctrine that is at fault in Buddhaghosa's account; the *description* practice (as far as the first attainment of *appanā-samādhi*) is gen- satisfactory. Indeed, the fact that a new set of names for the medi- stages was developed, centuries after the correspondences with the al set of *jhānas* had been lost sight of, indicates rather that the tra- of *jhāna* practice had survived intact down to Buddhaghosa's day, at he at least knew about the stages it entailed.

t the original correspondences between *jhāna* practice and *jhāna* ie were lost sight of in the first place is in keeping with the now / acknowledged development of an early split, within the Sangha, en meditator-monks and scholar-monks.[47] The Abhidhamma-like ients about the *jhānas* contained in the *Saṅgīti*, *Dasuttara*, and late *suttas*, are consistent with this split having begun to develop ng after the founder's death.[48] Already in the early days of the a meditators and Dhamma-expounders were going their separate a serious communication gap was developing.

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1 the split between the scholar-monks and the *jhāyins* or meditators, cf. 55. Also see Sukumar Dutt, *The Buddha and Five After-Centuries* on: Luzac, 1957) 99, 116-117; Louis de La Vallée Poussin, "Musīla et ı," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 5 (1937): 210-222; and Rod ell and Martin Stuart-Fox, "Did the Buddha Impart an Esoteric ng?" *Journal of Indian History* 61.1-3 (1983) 14-15.

·e D iii 219, D iii 274, where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are said to be lost ively; also cf. M i 294, M iii 25-29, S iv 263, where *ekaggatā* is said resent in the first *jhāna*.

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One negative consequence of Buddhaghosa's complex account of *jhāna* was that mastery of the higher *jhānas* was made to seem a superhuman attainment. With the entire series multiplied by itself, as it were, the total number of stages was greatly increased; and no genuine instructions were available for the attainment of any *jhāna* beyond the supposed first one. This effect continues to the present day. To most Buddhist meditators, even "the second *jhāna*" seems hardly a realistic goal, while "the *arūpa-jhānas*" appear impossibly remote. The present revised understanding of the *jhānas* should, therefore, give encouragement to practicing meditators. The path of concentration practice is not nearly as long and arduous as Buddhaghosa made it seem.

Table 1. Diagram of *jhāna*s 1 to 4.

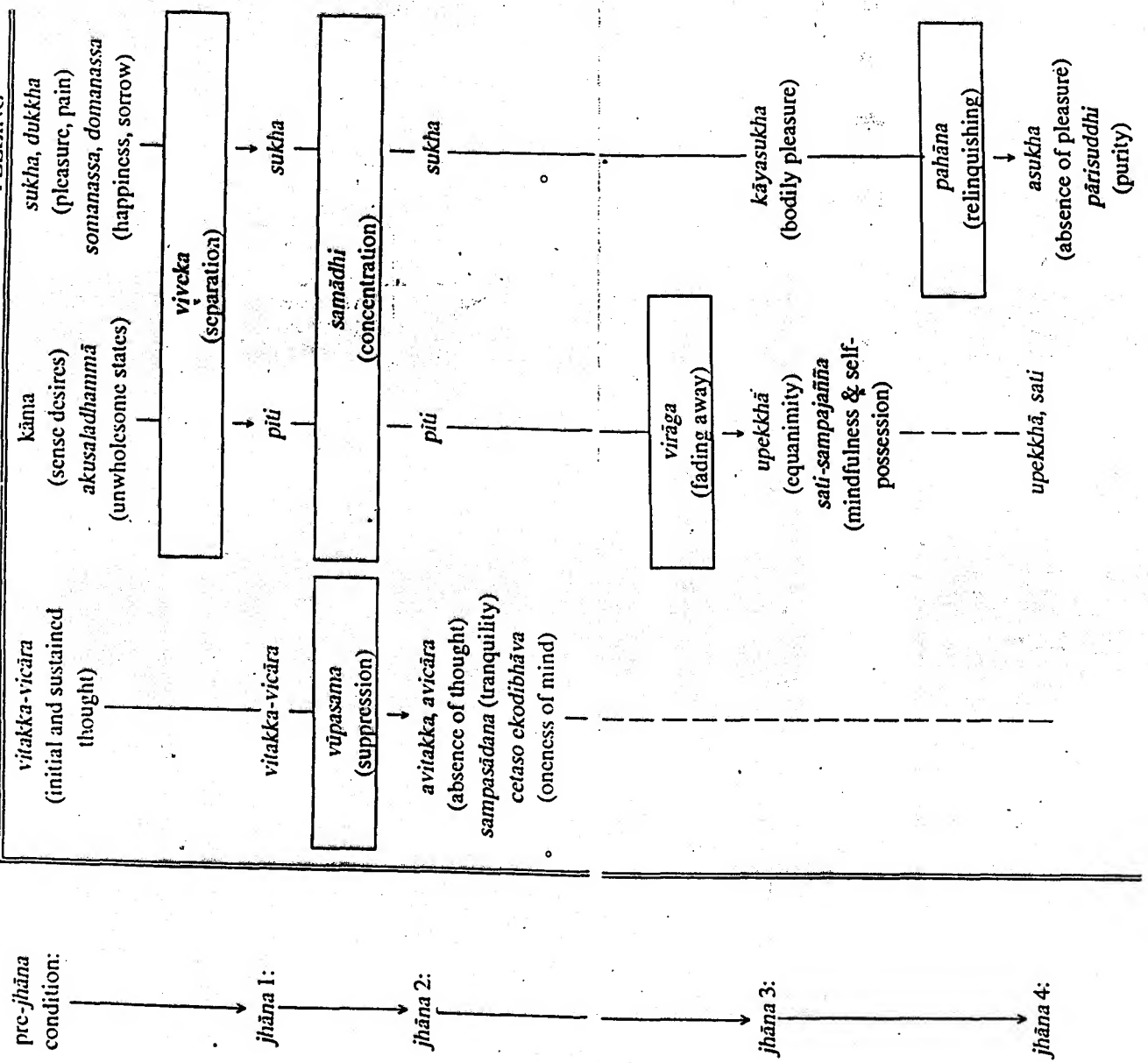

Table 2. Summary of *jhāna*s 1 to 4.

	THOUGHT	CONATION	FEELING
jhāna 1	*vitakkā-vicāra*	*piti*	*sukha*
↓	↓		
jhāna 2	*ekodibhāva*	*piti*	*sukha*
↓		↓	
jhāna 3	*ekodibhāva*	*upekkhā*	*sukha*
↓			↓
jhāna 4	*ekodibhāva*	*upekkhā*	*pārisuddhi*

Table 3. Simplified summary of *jhāna*s 1 to 4.

	THOUGHT	CONATION	FEELING
jhāna 1	*vitakka-vicāra*	*piti*	*sukha*
↓	↓		
jhāna 2	—	*piti*	*sukha*
↓		↓	
jhāna 3	—	—	*sukha*
↓			↓
jhāna 4	—	—	—

Table 4. Simplified summary of *jhāna*s 1 to 5.

	THOUGHT	CONATION	FEELING	SENSE PERCEPTION
jhāna 1	*vitakka-vicāra*	*piti*	*sukha*	*rūpasaññā*
↓	↓			
jhāna 2	---	*piti*	*sukha*	*rūpasaññā*
↓		↓		
jhāna 3	---	---	*sukha*	*rūpasaññā*
↓			↓	
jhāna 4	---	---	---	*rūpasaññā*
↓				↓
jhāna 5	---	---	---	---

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Table 5. Equivalences between sub-stages and *jhāna*s

SUB-STAGE	JHĀNA
parikamma-nimitta (preliminary sign)	1-4. *rūpa-jhāna*s
uggaha-nimitta (acquired sign)	5. *ākāsānañcāyatana* (endless space)
paṭibhāga-nimitta (counterpart sign)	6. *viññāṇañcāyatana* (endless consciousness)
? *upacāra-samādhi* (access concentration)	7. *ākiñcaññāyatana* (nothingness)
? *appanā-samādhi* (fixed concentration)	8. *neva saññā nāsaññāyatana* (neither perception nor non-perception)

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Jhāna and Buddhist Scholasticism

by Martin Stuart-Fox

Buddhism teaches as its highest truth a path of meditative practice for the attainment of a series of altered states of consciousness culminating in enlightenment and liberation. The central place accorded this course of meditative techniques in early Buddhism is reason enough to examine carefully and critically the various descriptions of it given in the Buddhist canon.

An examination of the texts, however, reveals both inadequacies and discrepancies. The more advanced techniques are too sketchily described to serve as guides to practicing meditators; descriptions of stages are repeatedly presented in stereotyped terms, discussed or elaborated upon only in much later commentaries; the meanings of words are often unclear. Variant listings of stages on the path to enlightenment are frequent.[1] And, in certain cases, textual descriptions contain what appear to be outright contradictions.

The tendency has been for believers and scholars alike to attempt to explain away such discrepancies, rather than to explain how they came to be present in the canon. In part this has been due to the concern of Buddhist scholars to extract from the texts some definitive statement of Buddhist theory and practice in order to reveal the "true nature" of Buddhism. Unfortunately, this often entails an exaggerated and uncritical respect both for the texts and for those who compiled them, together with a reluctance to question their accuracy, especially where they pertain to higher meditative practices. Thus, it has been claimed that if paradoxes occur, these must have been deliberately designed by the ancient compilers to shake us out of established patterns of thought, thus preparing our minds for the revelation of *Dhamma*.[2] Other modern scholars either

have been content to accept the attempts of earlier commentators to reconcile evident contradictions, or have simply ignored them.

Instead of explaining away textual discrepancies, however, a more productive line of inquiry would be to examine them critically for any light they may shed on the evolution of Buddhist thought and institutions. Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to examine two related discrepancies: the first between two descriptions of the composition of first *jhāna*; the second, the insertion of an additional *jhāna*, designated in this paper as *jhāna* la, in certain later texts.

A comparison is first made between the descriptions of first *jhāna* in the fourfold series given in the *Sutta-piṭaka*, and the descriptions of the first two *jhānas* in the fivefold series in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*. It will be maintained that neither the contradiction evident between the two descriptions of first *jhāna*, nor the insertion of *jhāna* la have been satisfactorily accounted for either in the commentarial literature or by modern scholars.[3] It will be argued on various grounds that the description of first *jhāna* in the *Abhidhamma* account is phenomenologically questionable. A discussion then follows of how the conflicting descriptions are likely to have come into existence, given what we know of the historical conditions under which early Buddhism evolved. It is suggested that the *Abhidhamma* listing is probably a product of Buddhist scholasticism, having no basis in meditative experience. The paper concludes by drawing out certain implications this study has for our understanding of the development of early Buddhism, and for the methodology of Buddhist studies.

I. Jhāna *in the* Suttapiṭaka

The importance of the *jhānas* as stages in Buddhist meditation is made abundantly clear time and again in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. Together the *jhānas* comprise the last stage, right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*), of the Noble Eightfold Path.[4] This indicates that the *jhānas* are stages in the practice of *samatha*, or meditation for calm, where the mind is prepared for *vipassanā*, the practice of insight.[5] This interpretation of the position of the *jhānas* in the Buddhist path is supported by canonical accounts of

Gotama's own enlightenment, according to which attainment of the fourth *jhāna* prepared his mind for developing the three forms of supernormal knowledge, (*tisso vijjā*), the last of which appears to constitute enlightenment.[6]

Descriptions of the four *jhānas* occur frequently throughout the *Sutta-piṭaka*, always in the same stereotyped form. The standard description for the first two *jhānas*, literally translated, and with certain key terms retained in their Pali forms, reads as follows.

> (1) Detached indeed from desires, detached from unwholesome states, attaining the with-*vitakka*, with-*vicāra*, detachment-born, *pīti-sukha* first *jhāna*, he abides [therein].
>
> (2) From the suppression of *vitakka-vicāra*, attaining inner tranquillity, one-ness of mind, the non-*vitakka*, non-*vicāra*, concentration-born *pīti-sukha* second *jhāna*, he abides [therein].[7]

The terms left untranslated—*vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti* and *sukha*—are those identified in the *Abhidhamma* as four of the five *jhāna* factors (*jhānaṅga*), to be discussed below.

Any analysis of the descriptions of the *jhānas* is hampered by difficulty in determining the meanings of key terms. Nevertheless, it is possible from these brief descriptions to gain some idea of (a) what constitutes first *jhāna*; and (b) how the progression from *jhāna* 1 to *jhāna* 2 is achieved. To begin with, first *jhāna* is characterized by separation (*vivicca*) from desires and unwholesome states. These are traditionally summed up in the five "hindrances" (*nīvaraṇa*): sensory desire, malice, sloth and torpor, distraction and remorse, and doubt.[8] In addition first *jhāna* is described as "detachment-born" or "separation-born" (*vivekajaṃ*), reinforcing the notion of separation from unwholesome mental states. On the positive side, first *jhāna* is characterized by the presence of *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti* and *sukha*. *Pīti* (usually translated as "joy") is subsequently transcended in the transition from second to third *jhāna*, and *sukha* ("pleasure") in the transition from third to fourth *jhāna*. As neither *pīti* nor *sukha* are involved in the transition from first to second *jhāna*, they will not be considered further in this discussion.

Vitakka and *vicāra* together constitute that characteristic which is present in first *jhāna* but not in second. The meaning

of these terms is therefore crucial to an understanding of what is entailed in that transition. Let us, therefore, look first at what light the textual description of second *jhāna* may shed on the meaning of *vitakka* and *vicāra*. The importance of the elimination of *vitakka* and *vicāra* for the attainment of the second *jhāna* is made clear by the repetition involved in the statement that the attainment of second *jhāna* is achieved through the suppression of *vitakka-vicāra*, and that the resulting state is non-*vitakka*, and non-*vicāra*. Now when the description of second *jhāna* is compared with the structurally similar description of first *jhāna*, it is clear that just as first *jhāna* is born of the detachment or separation (*viveka*) necessary to counter desires and unwholesome states, so second *jhāna* is born of the concentration (*samādhi*) necessary to suppress *vitakka-vicāra*. The quality of concentration is indicated by the statement that second *jhāna* is characterized by inner tranquillity (*ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ*) and one-ness of mind (*cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ*).

We are now in a position to investigate further the meaning of the two terms *vitakka* and *vicāra*. In the *Sutta-piṭaka*, *vitakka* often stands alone to mean "reflection, thought, thinking,"[9] whereas *vicāra* is only rarely found alone, and then in texts which reveal evidence of early *Abhidhamma* analysis, such as the description of three types of *samādhi*, to be discussed below. *Vitakka* is thinking *about* something: for example, *kāmavitakka* translates as "thoughts about love."[10] *Vicāra*, according to the definition given by Rhys Davids and Stede in their *Pali-English Dictionary* is "investigation, examination, consideration, deliberation,"[11] implying a deeper, more focused form of thinking. However Rhys Davids and Stede note that *vitakka* and *vicāra*, when used together in the combined form *vitakka-vicāra* found in the description of second *jhāna*, denote "one and the same thing: just thought, thinking, only in an emphatic way (as they are semantically synonymous) . . . one has to take them as *one* expression."[12] The suggestion here seems to be that when *vitakka* and *vicāra* were used in combination, the effect of adding *vicāra* was to reinforce or emphasize the denotation of *vitakka*, perhaps extending it to cover *all* varieties of thinking, including sustained and focused thought. It is thinking in this inclusive sense that the meditator suppresses through concentration when he attains one-ness of mind and thus moves from first to second *jhāna*.

So much can be gleaned from the stereotype description of first and second *jhāna* given in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. While lacking specific details, this description does provide certain essential instructions for the practicing meditator: to attain first *jhāna*, practice detachment to overcome desires and unwholesome mental states; to attain second *jhāna*, practice concentration to suppress thinking. In addition, the description specifies the positive qualities that indicate success in these endeavours, most notably the presence of inward tranquillity and one-ness of mind as signalling attainment of second *jhāna*.

II. Jhāna *in the* Abhidhamma

Elsewhere in the *Tipiṭaka* are found two other descriptions of the *jhānas*, both differing in important respects from the *Sutta* account. They are formally set out only in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, where they either have the same general form as the *Sutta* account, or take the form of lists of "*jhāna* factors."[13] These lists of factors are clearly not meant to be a comprehensive statement of the characteristics of the mental states constituting the various *jhānas*, as they omit some of the qualities included in the *Sutta* account.[14] Instead these lists of *jhāna* factors name only those characteristics that are involved in the transition from each *jhāna* to the next. The device of listing *jhāna* factors as a means of characterizing the sequence of *jhānas* was a relatively late development, a typically Abhidhammic mode of analysis and presentation which effectively reduced the *jhāna* description to its barest essentials.

Sometimes four *jhānas* are listed in the *Abhidhamma*; sometimes the number is extended to five by interpolating an additional *jhāna* (here called for convenience Ia) between the first and second *jhāna* of the *Sutta* account. Both the fourfold and fivefold *Abhidhamma* lists include mental onepointedness (*ekaggatā*) as a characteristic (or factor) in all the *jhānas*, thus conflicting with the *Sutta* account, which makes no mention of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna*. In the fivefold list, *jhāna* Ia is characterized as with *vicāra* but without *vitakka*. The two *Abhidhamma* descriptions, together with their counterpart from the *Sutta-piṭaka* are therefore as depicted in the following three tables.

Table 1

The *jhāna* factors in the *Sutta-piṭaka*

jhāna 1	*vitakka-vicāra*	*pīti*	*sukha*	
jhāna 2		*pīti*	*sukha*	*ekaggatā (= ekodibhāva*)*
jhāna 3			*sukha*	*(ekaggatā)*
jhāna 4				*(ekaggatā)*

**Ekodibhāva* is specifically mentioned only in *jhāna* 2. Though not mentioned in *jhānas* 3 or 4, it is clearly to be taken as characterizing these as well.

Table 2

The *jhāna* factors in the *Abhidhamma* fourfold *jhāna*

jhāna 1	*vitakka-vicāra*	*pīti*	*sukha*	*ekaggatā*
jhāna 2		*pīti*	*sukha*	*ekaggatā*
jhāna 3			*sukha*	*ekaggatā*
jhāna 4				*ekaggatā*

Table 3

The *jhāna* factors in the *Abhidamma* fivefold *jhāna*

jhāna 1	*vitakka-vicāra*	*pīti*	*sukha*	*ekaggatā*
jhāna 1a	*vicāra*	*pīti*	*sukha*	*ekaggatā*
jhāna 2		*pīti*	*sukha*	*ekaggatā*
jhāna 3			*sukha*	*ekaggatā*
jhāna 4				*ekaggatā*

There are in these tables two distinct, though related, discrepancies which require explanation: the addition in both *Abhidhammā* versions of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna*; and the interpolation in the fivefold *Abhidhamma* series of an additional stage (*jhāna* 1a), brought about through splitting *vitakka-vicāra* into two separate factors.

A comparison of tables 1 and 2 reveals that the only essential difference between the *Sutta* version and the fourfold *Abhidhamma* version lies in the addition of *ekaggatā* as a factor in *jhāna* 1. But this is a most curious addition. *Ekaggatā* (mental onepointedness) is synonymous with "one-ness of mind" (*cetaso ekodibhāva*) and, as noted above, is that characteristic of second *jhāna* which arises with the suppression of *vitakka-vicāra* through concentration, and which thereafter characterizes the remaining *jhānas*. It is synonymous with *cittass' ekaggatā*.[15] One would expect, therefore, that *ekaggatā*, if it is to be recognized as a *jhāna* factor, would appear only in second, third and fourth *jhānas*. In fact, however, in both the fourfold and the fivefold *Abhidhamma* lists of *jhāna* factors *ekaggatā is* included in first *jhāna* as well, along with the very factor, *vitakka-vicāra*, it is said in the *Suttas* to suppress. This obvious anomaly clearly requires explanation.

One possible explanation might be that the *ekaggatā* that the *Abhidhamma* ascribes to *jhāna* 1 may be somehow qualitatively different from that of the other *jhānas*. It seems reasonable to expect the mental one-pointedness of the lower *jhānas* to be less well-developed than that of the higher *jhānas*, less "stable,"[16] so more likely to break down through the intrusion of "hindering thoughts." Credence is lent to this view by the existence, according to the *Abhidhamma* of a "weak" form of *ekaggatā* defined as "persistence of thought"[17] or "stability of mind,"[18] which is said to characterize other mundane states of consciousness.[19] About this form of *ekaggatā* Buddhaghosa comments that none of the other characteristics of *ekaggatā* apply to it.[20] Buddhaghosa in fact recognizes three degrees or kinds of *ekaggatā*. The weakest kind is that present in "original consciousness." A degree stronger than this is the kind of *ekaggatā* present in the transitional state of consciousness known as access-*jhāna*, which characterizes the moment of entry into first *jhāna*. The third and strongest kind of *ekaggatā* is that characterizing first *jhāna*.[21]

In first *jhāna*, *ekaggatā* has already developed to the point where it is "touching the object well, as the lid above touches the surface of the box below."[22] In other words, Buddhaghosa believed both that the *ekaggatā* which characterizes first *jhāna* was qualitatively *different* from the weak form present in mundane states of consciousness, and that it was qualitatively *identical* with that characterizing the higher *jhānas*. Thus Buddhaghosa's account, with its three different grades of *ekaggatā*, provides no resolution of the anomaly of the presence of *ekaggatā*, as a factor in the first *jhāna*.

This brings us to the second discrepancy noted above, namely that in the fivefold *Abhidhamma* series only *vitakka* is suppressed in moving from first *jhāna* to *jhāna* la. *Vicāra* is separately suppressed only in the transition to the next stage again (second *jhāna*). This description makes sense only if it is in practice possible separately to suppress first *vitakka* then *vicāra*. In the *Sutta-piṭaka*, the term *vicāra* was used only to reinforce the meaning of *vitakka*. However, according to Rhys Davids and Stede: "With the advance in the Sangha of intensive study of terminology these terms become distinguished mutually. *Vitakka* became the inception of the mind, or attending, and was no longer applied, as in the Suttas, to thinking in general."[23] The *Vibhaṅga* distinguishes *vitakka* as "meditation, thinking, thought, fixation, focussing, application of the mind, right thought" from *vicāra*, which is "searching, examining, constant examining, scrutinizing, constant connection of (and) constant inspection by consciousness."[24] In other words, by the time of the *Abhidhamma*, *vicāra* had already taken on the sense of steady, focused thinking. By the time of Buddhaghosa (fifth century CE), the distinction had become well established. According to Buddhaghosa, *Vitakka* "is literally 'one thinks about,' or a 'thinking about'. . . . Its [main] *characteristic* is the lifting of consciousness on to the object. . . . It has the *function* of impinging, of circumimpinging. . . . Its *manifestation* is bringing the mind near to the object." By contrast, *vicāra* is "discursive work upon, or traversing of the object. It has threshing out (or contemplation) of object as *characteristic*, the linking of co-existent states to the object as *function*, and continuous binding as *manifestation*."[25] The question is, of course, whether the differentiation between *vitakka* and *vicāra* in the *Abhidhamma* reflected a more refined introspective phenomenological description of mind, or was merely a scholastic distinction made in the process of intellectual analysis. Here the commentarial literature is unhelpful. As Rhys Davids and Stede warn: "The explanations of Commentators are mostly of an edifying nature and based more on popular etymology than on natural psychological grounds."[26]

This terminological distinction in the fivefold series between *vitakka* and *vicāra* actually makes inclusion of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* even more anomalous. For though there seems to be some plausibility in the claim that sustained thought (*vicāra*) can coexist with onepointedness of mind (in *jhāna* la), it is clearly impossible for the mental process of casting around and alighting on an object of thought (*vitakka*) to be able to exist with onepointedness (in first *jhāna*). In this connection, it is perhaps not surprising to note that in the *Abhidhamma* listing there is disagreement over the means of transition from first *jhāna* to *jhāna* la. The *Vibhaṅga* states that *jhāna* la is *vivekajaṃ* (born of detachment), as is first *jhāna* in the fourfold series;[27] while the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* states it is *samādhijaṃ*, (born of concentration), as is *jhāna* 2 in the fourfold series.[28] This suggests, at the very least, that the monastic compilers were in disagreement not only over how the interpolated *jhāna* ought to be characterized, but also over how it should be attained.[29]

III. Attempts at Reconciling the Discrepancies

In view of these anomalies in both the four- and fivefold *Abhidhamma* lists, one might have expected Buddhists generally to have given preference to the *Sutta* description of first *jhāna* as being the "correct" version. Surprisingly, however, early commentators and modern scholars alike have consistently opted for the *Abhidhamma* account. For example, Buddhaghosa, while explicitly recognizing that *ekaggatā* is not present in first *jhāna* in the *Sutta* accounts, prefers the *Abhidhamma* version as superior even to that of the Buddha himself.

> Among the factors, although collectedness of mind [*ekaggatā*] is not shown in this [*Sutta*] reading, as "wherein is thinking applied and sustained," yet it is a factor, as is stated in the *Vibhaṅga*: *"jhāna is applied thinking, sustained thinking, rapture, bliss, collected-*

ness of mind." Whatever may have been the intention of the Blessed One in making the outline, it is revealed in the *Vibhaṅga*.[30]

In fact, so eager is Buddhaghosa to paper over the difference between the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma* accounts that in the chapter of his *Visuddhimagga* where he quotes the *Sutta* description, he goes on to refer in the next line to "the First Jhana, which has put away five factors, is endowed with five factors . . .".[31]

Modern scholars have tended to follow Buddhaghosa. Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera, in his *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*, agrees that whatever the *suttas* say, *ekaggatā* was meant to be included in first *jhāna*.[32] So too does Henepola Gunaratana, whose doctoral thesis on the *jhānas* is the most detailed modern study devoted to this most important aspect of Buddhist teaching. Gunaratana lists the four factors in first *jhāna* as described in the *Sutta* accounts, but then comments, "the fifth, one-pointedness, is added elsewhere."[33] Instead of discussing this discrepancy, he merely states that it is "more than obvious" that *ekaggatā* ought to be included in first *jhāna*.[34]

To account for the omission of *ekaggatā* from the *Sutta* account of *jhāna* 1, Gunaratana suggests that "the prominence of *ekaggatā* in the attainment of *jhāna* [by which he means specifically first *jhāna*] was so evident that it was felt unnecessary to mention it separately."[35] This suggestion finds little textual support. *Ekaggatā* is certainly prominent as a characteristic of *jhānas* 2, 3 and 4, but its prominence in them derives from the complete suppression of discursive thought; in *jhāna* 1 discursive thought is still present. Elsewhere, Gunaratana suggests that *ekaggatā* is not mentioned in the *Sutta* account of first *jhāna* because it is not until second *jhāna* that "concentration first acquires eminence." He supports this with the observation that: "The concentration of the first *jhāna*, being subject to the disturbing influence of applied thought [*vitakka*] and sustained thought [*vicāra*], is still imperfect."[36] But these two suggestions are based on contradictory premises. He cannot have it both ways: *ekaggatā* cannot both be so prominent in first *jhāna* as not to warrant mention *and* not acquire eminence until second *jhāna*.

There do exist, in the *Sutta-piṭaka*, three references to the occurrence of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna*. It is conceivable, therefore, that the *Abhidhamma* description is merely the formalization of

an alternative earlier, canonically supported description. However, critical examination of these three references reveals that all are textually suspect, late interpolations or additions to the Pali corpus. Only one of the three references attributes a statement on the occurrence of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* to the Buddha himself. It is found in the *Salāyatana-vagga* of the *Saṃyutta* and is set in the context of a miraculous appearance by the Buddha to the disciple Moggallāna,[37] a context which already suggests that the passage constitutes a later textual interpolation. In the course of this appearance, the Buddha urges the meditating disciple to practice mental onepointedness, repeating an identical exhortation for each *jhāna*. Thus, for the first *jhāna* the formula becomes: "Make steadfast thy mind in the first trance [*jhāna*]. In the first trance, make the mind one-pointed [*cittam ekodiṃ-karohi*]. In the first trance compose the mind."[38] That this same set formula is repeated without distinction for each *jhāna* could well be a consequence of faulty memorizing: reference to onepointedness in subsequent *jhānas* may have been extended inadvertently to first *jhāna* as well. But in view of the hagiographic reference to Moggallāna it seems more likely that this text is late, and was composed under Abhidhammic influence.

Support for this conclusion comes from another source, one whose importance was appreciated by A.K. Warder,[39] but which has not been used as often as it might have been by Pali scholars. That source is the Chinese counterpart of the four *nikāyas* (the Chinese *āgamas*). In the Chinese texts, this reference to the practice of onepointedness, together with "virtually the entire *Moggallāna-saṃyutta*" is missing,[40] thus indicating that the entire section represents a late addition to the Theravādin canon.[41]

A second example of a reference in the *Sutta-piṭaka* to the occurrence of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* occurs in the *Mahāvedalla-sutta* of the *Majjhima*.[42] There, the disciple Sāriputta states that first *jhāna* is "five-factored," (counting *vitakka-vicāra* as two factors instead of one and including *ekaggatā*). But Sāriputta's description contains an inconsistency. When asked what characterizes first *jhāna*, Sāriputta answers by listing four factors: *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti* and *sukha*, but then, on being asked how many factors are to be found in first *jhāna*, he replies that there are

five: *vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha* and *ekaggatā*! Now, as Pande points out, this *Sutta* bears all the hallmarks of a late text.[43] What is more, although its counterpart in the Chinese canon is otherwise all but identical, it lacks precisely this section on the composition of the *jhānas*.[44] This section therefore constitutes an even later interpolation in a late text, almost certainly to be attributed to the influence of early Abhidhammic analysis.

The third reference to *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* is found in the *Anupada-sutta*. There *ekaggatā* is included in a list of sixteen characteristics of first *jhāna*.[45] The list itself is full of anomalies, being both repetitive and inconsistent. It first follows the stereotype description of first *jhāna* with only *vitakka-vicāra, pīti* and *sukha*, but then goes on to list these same factors again, with *ekaggatā*. Other qualities listed include equanimity (*upekkha*) and "desire" (*chanda*). Equanimity is out of place because it is not supposed to be attained until third *jhāna*. Desire is out of place both because it conflicts with equanimity, and because it should be overcome with the attainment of first *jhāna*.[46] Not surprisingly, the entire *Anupada-sutta* does not exist in the Chinese canon, thus confirming Pande's identification of it as a demonstrably late text.[47]

We can only conclude that none of these three *Sutta-piṭaka* references constitutes evidence that the Buddha himself ever taught that *ekaggatā* was present in first *jhāna*. By including *ekaggatā*, Buddhaghosa, and a number of modern scholars as well, have without valid reason preferred the *Abhidhamma* description to that of the Buddha—a choice which itself is perhaps in need of explanation.

When we turn to attempts to reconcile the second discrepancy, concerning the interpolation of *jhāna* la in the fivefold *Abhidhamma* listing, we encounter another set of similarly unsatisfactory explanations. To the question "Why are four and five meditations taught?" the *Vimuttimagga* replies: "because the result depends on two sorts of men."

> Q. How does a yogin induce the second meditation from the first?
>
> A. He considers the coarseness of initial and sustained application of thought, knows the disadvantages of initial

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> and sustained application of thought, and induces the second meditation, which is free from initial and sustained application of thought. This is the way of progress in the four meditations.
>
> And again, there is another man. He is able to induce freely the second meditation out of the first meditation. He considers the coarseness of initial application of thought and knows the disadvantages of initial application of thought. He discerns the state of being free from initial application of thought. Possessing restricted sustained application of thought, he induces the second meditation. This is the way of progress in the five meditations. Therefore, the five meditations are taught.[48]

To this, Buddhaghosa, in the *Aṭṭhasālinī*, adds a further reason: "to adorn the teaching." This he explains as follows:

> Those conditions of the Law by which, because they have been thoroughly penetrated, the teaching is adorned—those conditions were thoroughly penetrated by the Tathagata. Hence, because of the vastness of his knowledge, the teacher, who is skillful in arranging his teaching, and who has attained the [art of] embellishing it, fixes that teaching by whatever factor that has come to hand, and in any way he chooses. Thus here he has classified a First Jhana of five factors, a fourfold Second Jhana 'without initial and with only sustained application of mind', a threefold Third Jhana, a twofold Fourth Jhana and a twofold fifth Jhana. This we have called embellishing the teaching.[49]

Neither of these two commentarial explanations can be said to be convincing. Modern scholars offer a variety of suggestions as to how the two lists arose. According to Rhys Davids and Stede, the *jhānas* form "one series of mental states, and the stages might have been fixed at other points in the series."[50] This is to make Gotama's division into four stages all but arbitrary, which is hardly convincing. Narasabho says: "It should be noted that the fivefold system is given with a view to varying

mental endowments as well as simplicity for cultivation of the aspirants [sic]. To some only *vitakka* appears gross whereas the remaining factors appear calm ..."[51] Gunaratana agrees.[52] Pande simply remarks that: "In the Abhidhamma-stage the four *Jhañas* were turned, for the sake of greater system, into a five-fold [sic]."[53] Other scholars ignore either one account or the other.[54]

Again, it might be suggested that the interpolation of *jhāna* la in the *Abhidhamma* fivefold listing merely formalizes earlier distinctions between *vitakka* and *vicāra* drawn in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. On five occasions in the *Suttas*, the following threefold classification of *samādhi* is given: (i) with *vitakka* and *vicāra*; (ii) without *vitakka* but with *vicāra*; and (iii) without *vitakka* or *vicāra*.[55] Since the *jhānas* constitute stages in the attainment of *sammā-samādhi*, this classification could possibly have led to the insertion of *jhāna* la into the *Abhidhamma*.[56] (At the same time, if *ekaggatā* is taken as the defining characteristic of *samādhi*, this classification could also suggest the possible presence of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna*.)

Reference to the Chinese texts throws some interesting light on these five references. The references in the *Saṃyutta* and the *Aṅguttara* are both late, as neither Pali *sutta* has any Chinese counterpart. Chinese counterparts do exist for those *suttas* in the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima* in which the remaining three references occur. In the case of the *Saṅgīti-sutta*, itself a demonstrably late text comprising a series of *Aṅguttara*-like numerical groups of short doctrinal statements,[57] the Chinese text closely follows the Pali sequence, except at just the point where the reference to the three kinds of *samādhi* occurs.[58] Of this there is no sign. In the *Dasuttara-sutta*, a slightly different situation pertains. The reference to three kinds of *samādhi* based on the presence or absence of *vitakka* and *vicāra* is replaced by a reference to three kinds of *samādhi* characterized by emptiness, desirelessness, and signlessness.[59] In this case, it would appear that an earlier, rather cryptic reference to three kinds of *samādhi* preserved in the Chinese rescension was replaced in the Theravādin canon by a simpler, but later classification.

It is the single reference to the threefold classification of *samādhi* that occurs in the *Majjhima* that permits us to narrow down the probable date of this curious doctrinal development. The reference occurs in the *Upakkilesa-sutta*, and is also found in the Chinese canon—with a single significant difference. The

second *samādhi* is described as one in which *vitakka* is absent and *vicāra* is *reduced*.[60] In the Pali version, *vicāra* is simply stated to be present. The Chinese description is repeated several times in this *sutta*, so it would appear that this may constitute a transitional version dating from the period when the distinction between *vitakka* and *vicāra* was being drawn on the basis that after "initial thought" was eliminated, it took time to eliminate "sustained thought." Now since it has been shown that the Chinese counterparts of the *Dīgha* and *Aṅguttara* were probably translated from the Dharmaguptaka canon, whereas the *Majjhima* and *Saṃyutta* were translated from the Sarvāstivādin canon,[61] it is possible to date this "transitional version" of the threefold classification of *samādhi* to the period between the breakaway of the Dharmaguptakas (no sign of the doctrine in the *Dīgha* or *Aṅguttara*) and the division between the Theravādins and the Sarvāstivādins (occurrence in the *Majjhima*, but not in its final Theravādin form).

IV. Resolving the Discrepancy

For modern scholars trained in the logic of textual analysis, the discrepancies evident between the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma* descriptions of the *jhānas* are too obvious to be disregarded. Either *ekaggatā* can coexist with *vitakka-vicāra*, or it cannot. Either there exists an intermediate stage (*jhāna* la) which is without *vitakka* but with *vicāra*, or there does not.[62] Logic alone suggests that *vitakka*, understood as discursive thought, cannot exist in any state of consciousness entailing one-pointed mental concentration: if the mind is casting around for an object upon which to focus, or is following one train of thought after another "like a wild monkey,"[63] it cannot be said to be one-pointed.

Whether or not *vitakka-vicāra* can coexist with *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* clearly has a lot to do with how the terms themselves are understood. It is admittedly difficult to be sure exactly what states and processes the terms used in early Buddhist psychology actually referred to, but as already indicted, change in the meaning of terms is insufficient to resolve the problem. Even as "initial application," *vitakka* retains a discursive component. The change in meaning of *vicāra* noted above, while it may explain the

interpolation of *jhāna* la in the *Abhidhamma* series, does nothing to elucidate the problem of first *jhāna*. Nor can change in the meaning of *ekaggatā* account for the presence of this factor together with *vitakka* in first *jhāna*. Even Buddhaghosa did not accept that *ekaggatā* as a factor of first *jhāna* was some weak form of attention such as was said to characterize less developed states of consciousness, including access-*jhāna*.[64]

In the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma* accounts we have two different descriptions of what is purported to be the same mental state. But because the descriptions are different, different interpretations are possible. First *jhāna*, is usually interpreted as a state of deep concentration, achievement of which is beyond the capacity of all but the most advanced meditators. This interpretation is based on the *Abhidhamma* account. From the *Sutta* account, however, a rather different interpretation is required. First *jhāna* in the *Sutta* account is the stage *before* mental one-pointedness is established. Rather than being a state of deep concentration, therefore, it seems to be a preliminary stage preceding a series of such states (the higher *jhāna* and *arūpa jhāna*). In the *Sutta* account, *vitakka-vicāra* and *ekaggatā* do not coexist precisely because it is through the elimination of *vitakka-vicāra* in the transition to second *jhāna* that one-ness of mind is attained. The first *jhāna* of the *Suttas* is evidently a state that can be readily attained by anyone who has practiced right mindfulness, a state that many wandering *samaṇas* would have been conversant with.

In principle, it ought to be possible to test the *Sutta* description of the transition from first to second *jhāna* through introspective analysis.[65] Gotama learned the lower *jhānas* from his earliest meditation masters, practiced them even as a child, and enjoined his disciples to do the same.[66] It should be possible, therefore, for present-day practitioners of meditation to apply similar techniques to attain similar elementary concentrated states, and thereby test the accuracy of the textual descriptions. Though introspective analytical reports of the kind developed in modern cognitive psychology[67] could not be taken as in themselves providing conclusive empirical evidence in support of Buddhist claims for the effectiveness of meditation techniques, they would lend strong support to textual accounts so confirmed.[68]

It is perhaps debatable whether this method of empirical

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verification would be applicable for higher stages of the Buddhist meditative path, such as the *arūpa jhānas* or the "Three Knowledges"; however its usefulness is much less problematic for the lower stages. Introspective analytical descriptions of elementary concentration states could be checked against the findings of text-based approaches such as those which make it possible to distinguish an earlier "primitive" Buddhism which might be ascribed to Gotama himself from later accretions through the dating of texts on the basis of language or content;[69] or through form-criticism of the kind pioneered by Biblical scholars.[70]

One way to obtain empirical verification of whether or not *ekaggatā* can possibly coexist with *vitakka-vicāra* in first *jhāna* would be to conduct a survey of Buddhist meditation masters from which presumably a clear consensus would emerge which would resolve the contradiction between the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma* accounts of first *jhāna*. There are, however, practical difficulties in the way of conducting such a survey. Those undergoing training in Buddhist meditation are usually under strict instructions not to discuss their experiences in the presence of anyone but their meditation master. Masters themselves are likely to be reluctant to advance any claim to have achieved higher meditative states, if only for fear of the negative effect such a claim is believed to have on spiritual progress toward *nibbāna*, and of the skepticism it might well provoke. However, meditation masters might be less reluctant to report on their introspective experience of lower meditative stages—especially if this took the form of commenting upon published accounts by non-Buddhists applying Buddhist techniques.[71]

Descriptions of concentration practice by non-Buddhists provide a possible alternative means of verification, though only *prima facie* evidence could be so adduced in support of one textual description or another. Such *prima facie* evidence is available, in fact, to anyone willing to embark on a course of elementary concentration practice. The immediate goal of such practice is to achieve mental one-pointedness through concentrating attention upon some object of perception, such as the tactile sensation of the breath at the right nostril.[72] The most notable characteristic of this concentrated state, when one reflects upon the experience, is that the chatter of thought is temporarily stilled. Most people have probably experienced this phenome-

non on occasions when they have become totally engrossed in some sensory stimulus—for example when listening intently to music, or when immersed in the beauty of a sunset. Normally, the flow of thought quickly resumes, but with practice it is possible to extend the concentrated state to endure minutes at a time. Even this elementary experiment in concentration indicates that mental one-pointedness cannot coexist with discursive thought. Phenomenological analysis thus confirms what logic would lead us to expect, namely that the *Sutta* description in which first *vitakka-vicāra* and *ekaggatā* do *not* coexist in first *jhāna* is the correct one.

Now it is just conceivable that confusion over the composition of first *jhāna* could have arisen from exegesis of the passage of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* quoted above in which the meditator is instructed to make the mind one-pointed in first *jhāna*. According to the *Sutta-piṭaka* account, the meditator must suppress all discursive thought in order to attain second *jhāna*. (This would require that preliminary attempts to establish one-pointedness be made *in* first *jhāna*.[73] In this sense, *ekaggatā* could perhaps be said to occur here. Even so, this one-pointedness of mind would never *coexist* with discursive thought. During those short periods when one-pointedness was achieved, discursive thought would necessarily stop. One-pointedness of mind of significant duration could only be said to be present when discursive thought no longer disrupted the concentrated state. If first *jhāna* is *characterized* by the presence of discursive thought, it can hardly also be characterized by mental one-pointedness, even if in the course of elementary concentration practice discursive thought were to be momentarily restrained. Only when discursive thought is fully suppressed through concentration could "oneness of mind" be termed a factor, that is, a permanent characteristic of the state attained—and that is said to occur only in second *jhāna*. Thus, on the basis of the logic of definition, one would have to conclude that the Abhidhammic first *jhāna* was inaccurately characterized, and that the *Sutta* description should be preferred.

If logic and introspective analysis of concentration practice both confirm the *Sutta* description of first *jhāna*, and textual exegesis and change in the meaning of terms cannot explain the presence there of *ekaggatā* as a characterizing factor, one

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must ask why all schools of Buddhism have accepted the later *Abhidhamma* account in preference to what was in all probability Gotama's own earlier description. This is not the same as asking, more fundamentally, how *ekaggatā* came to be included in first *jhāna* in the first place. Once *ekaggatā* had become included in the canon, Buddhists very naturally accepted the new description without question. The *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, as one of the three "baskets," not only is scripturally as authoritative as the *Sutta-piṭaka*; it even purports to be more analytically exact. If the *Abhidhamma* says *ekaggatā* is present in first *jhāna*, no school would contradict it. To elaborate the doctrine is one thing; to take issue with the most authoritative texts on Buddhist analytical psychology would be quite another.

We should not be surprised that once *ekaggatā* had come to be included in first *jhāna*, this was accepted by all schools of Buddhism. What is noteworthy is that this development necessarily led to a reinterpretation of first *jhāna*. Once *ekaggatā* had been included, first *jhāna* could hardly be taken to be an elementary stage in concentration practice. Instead it came to be conceived as something far more exalted which few monks could hope to attain—a view that would have been reinforced by the belief that gradual decline of the *Dhamma* was inevitable.

The interesting question, however, is not why believing Buddhists accepted the *Abhidhamma* account once *ekaggatā* had become a factor of first *jhāna*, but rather how it came to be included as a factor in the first place. As we have seen, *prima facie* evidence that mental one-pointedness and discursive thought cannot coexist makes the possibility that the change in description was based on more refined introspective analysis unlikely. It is possible that more refined introspective analysis was responsible for drawing the distinction found in the *Abhidhamma* fivefold series between *vitakka* as the "initial application" of thought and *vicāra* as "sustained" thinking about it. This distinction between two modes of thought is one which most people would be familiar with, and could hardly have been overlooked by those responsible for the kind of psychological analysis we find in the *Abhidhamma*. Anyone who has thought deeply about anything knows that focusing attention on *content* can prevent the arising of random mental images.[74]

The description of *jhāna* 1a in the fivefold series as charac-

terized by both sustained thought and mental one-pointedness could, therefore, conceivably be defended as phenomenologically accurate on the grounds that sustained thought constitutes a form of concentration, that concentrated focus on the content of thought constitutes mental one-pointedness. However, this description of *jhāna* la could still be questioned on the grounds that *ekaggatā* as one-pointed concentration actually eliminates *all* thought. In any case, while it may well be that more refined Abhidhammic introspective analysis led to differentiation between *vitakka* and *vicāra*, and even to the inclusion of *ekaggatā* as a factor of the additional inserted *jhāna* la, this cannot with any plausibility explain how *ekaggatā* came to be considered to coexist with *vitakka* in first *jhāna*.

Neither changes in the meanings of words, nor refinements in psychological analysis, can provide, with any plausibility, an explanation for the discrepancies associated with the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma* descriptions of the *jhānas*. Nor, as indicated above, did references in the *Sutta-piṭaka* provide precedent for the inclusion of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* or the insertion of *jhāna* la, since the relevant sections did not form part of the early corpus of memorized texts upon which early *Abhidhamma* formalization would have been based.[75] On the contrary, it is much more likely that both references to *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* and the threefold classification of *samādhi* were products of Abhidhammic scholasticism only later interpolated into the canon.

This conclusion would be further strengthened if it could be shown how the earlier *Sutta* description came to be altered to produce the *Abhidhamma* version. Unfortunately, conclusive historical evidence of this kind simply does not exist. What the historian can do, however, is attempt to construct a hypothetical account of how the alteration might have occurred, given what we know of the historical development of early Buddhism, and offer some assessment of the likelihood and coherence of such an account.

The following explanation for why the *Abhidhamma* lists *five* factors in first *jhāna* takes particular account of Buddhist scholastic mentality. Let us begin with the *jhāna* factors. These are known collectively as the *jhānaṅgas*, a term which does not occur in the *Sutta-piṭaka*. Together with the concept it connotes, this term is a product of Abhidhammic scholasticism.[74] It seems

likely that for the *jhānas*, the characterizing factors first listed were those which necessarily had to be overcome in moving successfully to higher *jhānas* (see table 1). *Ekaggatā* would have been included as a factor *gained*, not lost, because of its prominence in characterizing the higher *jhānas* and the emphasis placed upon it by practicing meditators. With the division of *vitakka-vicāra* into two factors, first *jhāna*, the stage attained through overcoming the five hindrances, was characterized by four factors. But for the scholastic mind, there existed an uncomfortable asymmetry where five hindrances were juxtaposed with four *jhāna* factors. Five hindrances needed to be paired with a list of five factors, a compelling reason for discovering an additional factor in first *jhāna*—and the factor most readily available (as comparison of tables 1 and 2 shows) was *ekaggatā*.

Scholastic concern over the relationship between the hindrances and the *jhāna* factors provides the key to understanding how the discrepancy between the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma* descriptions of the *jhānas* is likely to have arisen. A direct relationship is first stated in the *Mahāvedalla-sutta*, already referred to. There, Sāriputta replies as follows to the question how many "factors" are abandoned and how many possessed in first *jhāna*:

> Your reverence, in regard to the first meditation, five factors are abandoned, five are possessed: if a monk has entered on the first meditation, desire for sense-pleasure is abandoned, malevolence is abandoned, sloth and torpor are abandoned, restlessness and worry are abandoned, doubt is abandoned, but there is initial thought and discursive thought, rapture and joy and one-pointedness of mind. Thus, your reverence, in regard to the first meditation, five factors are abandoned, five factors are possessed.[75]

It is never explicitly stated in the *Tipiṭaka* that each of the five *jhāna* factors is instrumental in overcoming a specific hindrance. Buddhaghosa states that a direct one-to-one correspondence between the five *jhāna* factors and the hindrances is given in the *Peṭakopadesa*.[76] But in this he is mistaken; all we in fact find in the *Peṭakopadesa* is a statement that the "five-factored meditation [*jhāna*]" is the "opposite" of the five hindrances.[77] Nevertheless, by the time Buddhaghosa was writing, these equivalences were well established: one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) was said to be

opposed to sensory desire (*kāmacchanda*), joy (*pīti*) to malice (*vyāpāda*), initial application of mind (*vitakka*) to sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), bliss (*sukha*) to distraction and remorse (*uddhaccakukkucca*), and sustained application of mind (*vicāra*) to doubt (*vicikicchā*).[78]

Now, some of these equivalences seem quite inappropriate.[79] For example, one might have expected *ekaggatā* to neutralize *uddhaccakukkucca* (distraction and remorse) rather than sensory desire. As for *vitakka*, it is hard to see how it could be thought of as neutralizing anything. Apologists explain that the *vitakka* which counters sloth and torpor is of a special kind![80] Nor does it seem likely that *vicāra* would neutralize doubt. On the contrary, doubt could actually be encouraged by sustained thought. Here apologists claim that *vicāra* counteracts doubt only when it is "directed to *jhāna*."[81]

The *Vimuttimagga* provides an even more bizarre example of the lists of one-to-one correspondences so dear to the scholastic mind. There the relevant passage states: "The hindrances are overcome by the perfection of the five *jhāna* factors. The overcoming of the first hindrance is the first meditation, *jhāna*. Thus the overcoming of the five hindrances results in five meditations, *jhānas*."[82] The five hindrances are not overcome by five *jhāna* factors in first *jhāna*. Rather, the hindrances are overcome as the *jhāna* factors are *lost* in moving through the series of five *jhānas*. This account is obviously inconsistent with the description of the first *jhāna* as characterized by separation from unwholesome states (all five hindrances), and makes no sense in terms of the *jhānas* as a sequence of ever more concentrated mental states.

The *Vimuttimagga* provides an excellent example of two reinforcing scholastic tendencies—to draw up neat and regular lists wherever possible, and to equate lists so that individual items in each are paired in symbolic relationship.[83] Both tendencies are already evident throughout the later sections of the *Tipiṭaka*. It was this penchant in Indian scholasticism (for it is not found only in Buddhist writings) for composing lists and drawing symbolic parallels that best accounts for both the inclusion of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna*, and for the insertion of *jhāna* la.

The description of the *jhānas* in the *Sutta-piṭaka* specifies the presence of *ekaggatā* only in second *jhāna*, but it is clearly

to be understood as continuing to characterize third and fourth *jhānas*. If *ekaggatā* is included in *jhānas* 3 and 4, the asymmetrical Table 1 results. It would be natural for the scholastic mind to "complete" the table by including *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna*. Subsequently, *vitakka-vicāra* was divided into two separate factors almost certainly in order to "match" the previously existing set of five hindrances with the necessary number of *jhāna* factors,[84] rather than as a result of more refined introspective analysis. Together, these scholastic exercises would have given rise first to the *Abhidhamma* fourfold *jhāna* set out in Table 2, and then to the even neater and still more formally satisfying fivefold arrangement of Table 3.

That the inclusion of a *jhāna* stage in which *vitakka* is missing but *vicāra* retained probably resulted from scholastic formalizing rather than introspective analysis is further indicated by the conflicting descriptions of this *jhāna* in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* and the *Vibhaṅga* remarked on above, and by the treatment of the *jhānas* in the *Kathā-vatthu*[85] where the "Theravādins" are said to argue, against adherents of other schools, that *no* intervening stage exists between first and second *jhānas* in the *Sutta* account. And yet in the Theravādin *Abhidhamma* the fivefold listing clearly does include *jhāna* la as just such an "intermediate stage." It appears that by this time the *jhānas* had for some monks become no more than another "point of controversy."

The suggestion that the Abhidhammic description of first *jhāna* resulted from scholastic elaboration rather than constituting a phenomenologically accurate reporting of an attained meditative state is unthinkable only for those who approach the *Abhidhamma* as sacred scripture or with exaggerated deference for the wisdom of the *arhats*. In fact, we have strong historical evidence for the development of Buddhist scholasticism. Soon after Gotama's death, the *saṅgha* changed from being a band of wandering mendicants to become a settled monastic order.[86] At the same time there developed an immense body of oral literature, all of which had to be memorized until the canon was written down, some time after the reign of Aśoka. To memorize these lengthy records groups of *bhikkhus* were responsible for different sections. Dutt describes the process:

> Each group would then memorize and also specialize in its own

section, not as mere reciters (*bhānakas*), but as professors, expositors, commentators—in short as custodians of both the texts and their true meaning.[87]

Thus, we find reference to *Dhammakathikas* (expounders of Dhamma), *Vinayadharas* (experts in the *Vinaya*), and *Suttantikas* (specialists on the *Suttas*). Another group were designated the *Jhāyins*, literally those who practice the *jhānas*. At *Aṅguttara* iii. 355 the tension is revealed that existed between the *Jhāyins* (which Hare translates as "musers") and *Dhammayogas* (Hare's "Dhamma-zealots", followers of the *Dhamma* as texts to be studied).[88] Each group apparently had been criticizing the other: each considered its particular way of practice to be the only true way to *nibbāna*. The lesson of the text is that such disputes should end: each group should respect the methods of the other, for both lead to the same goal, though few enough of either group will attain it.

Two things should be noted about this text: first, that such mutual criticisms were being voiced; second, that there had already evolved an influential group of monks seeking to apprehend the supreme reality by means of the intellect,[89] rather than by the meditative techniques pioneered by the Buddha. A contest was taking place for the soul of the *saṅgha* between on the one hand, the *Dhammayogas*, those "puffed up, proud, excitable fellows, mouthy speechifiers, forgetful of mindfulness, lacking self-possession and composure, with their thoughts a-wander and their sense-governance rude," and on the other hand the *Jhāyins*, those who had "touched with the body the deathless state."[90] In this contest, the *Jhāyins* lost.

Further evidence for a steady decline in the practice of *jhāna* in the *saṅgha* comes from the *Vinaya-piṭaka*. As C.A.F. Rhys Davids points out, the *Vinaya* contains few references to the *jhānas* as a system of meditation a monk should pursue, and only four references to *Jhāyins* and their special needs. She concludes that the practice of *jhāna* had already seriously declined for:

> there is no doubt that had the Sangha, during the centuries when the Vinaya was growing by accretions, held Jhāna in its original worth, it would have produced a disciplinary chronicle glowing with Jhāna atmosphere throughout.[91]

From the admittedly fragmentary evidence that is available, it is clear that the *Jhāyins* within the early *saṅgha* soon became a minority, a trend undoubtedly accelerated by the rapid expansion of the *saṅgha* under Aśoka.[92] As meditators, they were probably as unconcerned with the organization and administration of the *saṅgha* as they must have been with speculative debates on aspects of *Dhamma*, or the compiling and memorizing of texts. This was left to the scholastically inclined.

Long before the time of Buddhaghosa, the Buddhist *saṅgha* had become predominantly a worldly organization, concerned above all with its own preservation, with maintaining its popular appeal and princely patronage. By that time the meditative tradition may well have been reduced to little more than an eccentric group of recluses.[93] Since most textual commentators stood squarely in the *Dhammayoga* tradition, it seems likely that most were not *Jhāyins* but scholars and exegetes who elaborated scholastic discussions of the path while lacking acquaintance with the higher stages of meditative practice. It is not hard to see how, in the hands of such monks, the scholastic equating of five *jhāna* factors with the five hindrances in first *jhāna* might have occurred.

V. Conclusion

This paper has argued that the two descriptions of first *jhāna*, the four-factor *Sutta* listing and the five-factor *Abhidhamma* listing, are contradictory and cannot be reconciled. Attempts to achieve such a reconciliation, both in the commentarial literature and by modern scholars, are unconvincing. Textual analysis alone suggests that the inclusion of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* is logically incompatible with the presence of *vitakka*, even given later modifications of meaning of both terms. Elementary concentration practice confirms that coexistence of *ekaggatā* with *vitakka* is at least phenomenologically questionable. There is a strong *prima facie* case, therefore, for supposing the later *Abhidhamma* description to be invalid, and the *Sutta* description to be the correct one.

This conclusion suggests that by the time the *Abhidhamma* texts came to be written down, a high degree of scholasticism characterized Buddhist thinking. Evidence of the incorrect description of first *jhāna* thus supports C.A.F. Rhys Davids' conclu-

sion that various "psychic" states are described in the *Abhidhamma* in such a way as to indicate that "the compilers *had not themselves any experience at first hand of what they were recording.*"[94] By accepting the *Abhidhamma* texts as canonical, all later commentators were faced with the problem of explaining away evident discrepancies. Rather than do this, one would be better advised to treat *Abhidhamma* texts and the commentarial literature with more critical suspicion than has usually been the case, even where the subject matter is the descriptive psychology of those altered states of consciousness that the texts purport to reveal.

Two wider implications should therefore be drawn from the above analysis, touching upon both the historical development of early Buddhism and the methodology of Buddhist studies. It would appear that the gap between those who spent their time in the *saṅgha* practicing meditation (the *Jhāyins*) and those who discussed and commented upon the *Dhamma* (the *Dhammayogas*) was already wide and deep by the time the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* had taken shape. In part, no doubt, this was due to different abilities and interests. But it was probably also exacerbated by the form of esoteric transmission by which the meditative tradition was communicated to adepts. Divorced as they most probably were from experience of those states of consciousness attained through application of advanced meditative practices, Buddhist scholastics pursued their own course of elaborating increasingly complex lists of categories such as we find in the *Abhidhamma*. What they have to say about altered states of consciousness should therefore be treated with caution.

The second implication is that textual contradictions must be recognized as such. They must not be dismissed on the grounds that accounts of experiential states of mind "elude mere intellectual treatment."[95] Contradictions arise as historical developments and require historical explanation. We cannot assume meditative practices to have remained constant during the millennium from the time of Gotama to that of Buddhaghosa, any more than we can assume textual compilation over this period to have been unaffected by the divisions and debates that were occurring both within the *saṅgha* with the rise of the Mahāyāna schools, and between Buddhism and resurgent Hinduism. As scholars, we must be even more critical than we have been in studying the texts. By so doing, we will be in a position

both to throw further light on shaping historical circumstances, and to contribute to a better understanding of Buddhist meditative techniques. In this way, scholarly study may explicate stages in the Buddhist path to enlightenment of practical benefit to modern day meditators.

NOTES

1. This question has been dealt with by Rod Bucknell in "The Buddhist Path to Liberation: an analysis of the listing of stages", *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 7 (1984), pp. 7–40. I gratefully acknowledge Bucknell's valuable criticisms of successive drafts of this paper.

2. Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 2nd ed. trans. by Williard R. Trask (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 250.

3. Recent studies of *jhāna* include: L.S. Cousins, "Buddhist *jhāna*: its nature and attainment according to the Pali sources," *Religion* 3 (1973): 115–131; Winston L. King, *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), pp. 47–48; Donald K. Swearer, "Control and Freedom: The structure of Buddhist Meditation in the Pali Suttas," *Philosophy East and West* 23 (1973) 435–455; and Paul Griffiths, "Buddhist *jhāna*: a form-critical study," *Religion* 13 (1983): 55–68.

4. D ii. 313.

5. The relationship between the two paths, of concentration and insight, is still a matter for debate among scholars. See Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravāda Buddhist Meditation-Theory," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 49 (1981): 605–624.

6. Cf M i. 22.

7. (1) *vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

(2) *vitakka-vicārānam vūpasamā ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* This description occurs frequently, e.g., at D i.182ff.

8. Listed at, e.g., D i. 71–73, D iii. 49, etc. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (hereafter Dhs) lists six hindrances, including ignorance (# 1152).

9. T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary* (London: Luzac, 1959), p. 620.

10. M i.114f. cf. Rune E.A. Johansson, *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism* (London: Curzon Press, 1979), pp. 185–190 for an analysis of the meaning of *vitakka*.

11. *Pali-English Dictionary*, p. 615.

12. Ibid., p. 620.

13. *Vibhaṅga* 263–266, (hereafter Vibh), translated as *The Book of Analysis* by Pathamakyaw Ashin Thittila (London: Luzac, 1969), pp. 344–348.

14. Cf. the list of "factors of association" given in the *Peṭakopadesa* 139 translated as *The Piṭaka-Disclosure* by Bhikkhu Ñaṇamoli (London: Luzac, 1964), p. 186. In the *Anupada-sutta*, Sāriputta identifies numerous other factors characteristic of the *jhānas* (M iii. 25). This list is extended still further in the *Abhidhamma* and later commentaries. Cf. Nārada Mahā Thera, *A Manual of Abhidhamma* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1968), pp. 77–78.

15. At D ii. 217, also M 1. 301, *samādhi* is defined as *cittass' ekaggatā*. See also Dhs 11 and 24 where *cittass' ekaggatā* and *sammāsamādhi* are defined in identical terms. (Cf also Dhs # 287 and 291.)

16. Vibh #575.

17. Dhs #424 (translated by Caroline A.F. Rhys Davids as *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, 3rd ed. (London: Pali Text Society, 1974), p. 105).

18. *The Expositor*, vol II, p. 345 (translation of the *Aṭṭhasālinī* by Pe Maung Tin (London: Luzac, 1920)).

19. Dhs #556. Cf. *Aṭṭhasālinī* p. 293. Bhikkhu J. Kashyap in *The Abhidhamma Philosophy* (Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1982), p. 46, states that *ekaggatā* varies in strength from "very feeble" to "fully steady" in these *jhānas*.

20. *Aṭṭhasālinī* #259. Cf. *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics*, p. 105, note.

21. *Visuddhimagga* #147 (hereafter Vism) Translated as *The Path of Purity* by Pe Maung Tin (London: Luzac, 1923).

22. Ibid.

23. *Pali-English Dictionary*, p. 620.

24. Vibh #257 *The Book of Analysis*, p. 335. In *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics* Caroline A.F. Rhys Davids states that, in her opinion, *vitakka* is a "distinctively mental procedure at the inception of a train of thought, the deliberate movement of voluntary attention" (p. 8, note 1). *Vicāra* is "the movement and maintenance of the voluntary thought continuum," something which includes the senses of investigation, analysis, and discursive thought (p. 9, note 4).

25. *Aṭṭhasālinī* #114–115; *The Expositor*, pp. 151–152. Cf. also Vism #142, pp. 164–165.

26. *Pali-English Dictionary*, p. 620 A later text, the *Abhidhammaṭṭha-Saṅgaha*, adds little or nothing to our understanding of the meaning of the terms under discussion. *Vitakka* in first *jhāna* is said to be directing of the mind to the "after-image," a meaning apparently compatible with the presence of *ekaggatā*, while the presence of *ekaggatā* in mundane states of consciousness is explained by denying that in such cases it connotes "concentration." Cf. *Compendium of Philosophy* (London: Luzac, 1972), p. 178, note 5. Such modifications of meaning constitute attempts to explain away, rather than explain, the presence of both *vitakka* and *ekaggatā* together in first *jhāna* in the *Abhidhamma*.

27. Vibh #264; *The Book of Analysis*, p. 345.

28. Dhs #168.

29. Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas in the Theravāda Buddhist Meditation*, Ph.D dissertation, American University, Washington 1980

pp. 214–215, suggests an editorial error may have occurred in one or the other description of *jhāna* Ia but is unable to decide which might be correct.

30. Vism #147. *The Path of Purity*, p. 170. Ñāṇamoli translates the last sentence somewhat differently: "for the intention with which the Blessed One gave the summary [i.e., the *Sutta* version] is the same as that with which he gave the exposition that follows it [ie in the *Abhidhamma*]." The Path of Purification vol. 1, p. 153.

31. Vism #139, *The Path of Purity*, p. 161.

32. Paravahera Vajirañāṇa Mahāthera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice* (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 1962), p. 38.

33. Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas*, p. 105.

34. Ibid., p. 196.

35. Ibid., p. 143.

36. Ibid., p. 174. Cf Vism #126.

37. S iv. 263, translated as *The Book of Kindred Sayings* by F.L. Woodward (London: The Pali Text Society, 1927), p. 180.

38. Ibid.

39. A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), pp. 4–10.

40. Rod Bucknell, "The Importance of Pali/Chinese Comparisons in Studies of Early Buddhist Doctrine," paper presented at the IXth annual conference of the Australian Association for the Study of Religions, Canberra, August 1984, p. 4.

41. Pande agrees that the "Sayings about Moggallāna" are almost certainly late. G.C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism* 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), p. 229.

42. M i. 294.

43. Pande concludes that the whole *sutta* is a late composition. See Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*, p. 134.

44. Taishō 26 (211). See Bucknell, "The Importance of Pali/Chinese Comparisons," p. 4.

45. M iii. 25–29.

46. The translation of *chanda* as "desire" is I.B. Horner's. A better translation might be "impulse (towards something)." But in any case *chanda* should be overcome in first *jhāna*.

47. Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*, p. 318, calls this an early Abhidhammic text.

48. *Vimuttimagga*, translated as *The Path of Freedom* by N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera (Colombo: D. Roland D. Weerasuria, 1961), p. 46. The "second meditation" referred to is our "*jhāna* Ia."

49. *Aṭṭhasālinī* 179, *The Expositor*, vol. 1, p. 240.

50. *Pali-English Dictionary*, p. 286.

51. Phra Maha Singathon Narasabho, *Buddhism: A Guide to a Happy Life* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornraja-vidyalaya, 1971), p. 66.

52. Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas*, p. 211 Gunaratana illustrates the relationship of the two systems through the metaphor of two mountain climbers who climb the same mountain using different ascent stages (pp. 211–212).

53. Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*, p. 534.

54. For example, Edward J. Thomas does not mention fivefold *jhāna* in either *The Life of Buddha* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), or *The History of Buddhist Thought* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951). Nor does Winston King, in *Theravāda Meditation*. Neither does Nalinaksha Dutt in *Early Monastic Buddhism* (Calcutta: Oriental Book Agency, 1960); but whereas King quotes the *Sutta* account of first *jhāna*, Dutt describes the fourfold *Abhidhamma* account with *ekaggatā* included (p. 188).

55. At D iii. 219; D iii. 274; M iii. 162; S iv. 360, 363; A iv. 300–301.

56. Buddhaghosa specifically refers to these three forms of *samādhi*. *Aṭṭhasālinī* #179.

57. Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*, p. 115.

58. Taishō i. 50. See Bucknell, "The Importance of Pali/Chinese Comparisons." p. 5.

59. Ibid. Cf. Taishō i. 53.

60. Ibid. Cf. Taishō i. 538.

61. See Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, pp. 7–9.

62. For believing Buddhists, the problem may not seem so clear cut. The Indian tetralemma permits the two further alternatives of "both . . . and . . ." and "neither . . . nor . . . ."

63. S ii. 94.

64. Vism #147.

65. Cf. Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, *The Twilight Language: Explorations in Buddhist Meditation and Symbolism* (London: Curzon Press and New York: St Martins Press, 1986).

66. Cf M i. 246; D i. 74–76; M i. 347.

67. As developed in, for example, Alan Richardson, *The Experiential Dimension of Psychology* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984).

68. Cf. Frank Hoffman, "The Buddhist Empiricism Thesis," *Religious Studies* 18 (1982), pp. 151–158.

69. Cf. Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*. Also Kogen Mizuno, *Primitive Buddhism*, trans. by Kosho Yamamoto (Ube: The Karin Bunko, 1969).

70. Griffiths, "Buddhist Jhāna." Griffiths analyzed the 86 occurrences in the *Sutta-piṭaka* of the stereotype description of the four *jhānas* in order to define the position of the *jhānas* in alternative soteriological paths. His conclusions, though of interest, do not, however, go far enough, for the form-critical method fails to take account of historical context. We obtain no hint from Griffiths' study as to the origins of these different paths and the goals to which they lead. Nor is any light shed on the historical circumstances that led to the incorporation of variant paths in the Pali Canon.

71. For examples of descriptions of meditation, see R.N. Walsh, "Initial meditative experiences," parts I & II, *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 9 (1977), pp. 157–192 and 10 (1978), pp. 1–28; Rod Bucknell, "Experiments in Insight Meditation," *Australian Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 3 (1983), pp. 96–117; and chapters 3 and 4 of Bucknell and Stuart-Fox, *The Twilight Language*.

72. Cf. the *Ānāpānasati-sutta* M iii. 82.

73. Gunaratana suggests that the term *samādhijaṃ* (literally born of concentration) in the description of second *jhāna* could be understood as meaning that second *jhāna* is born of the concentration applied in first *jhāna* (Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas*, p. 175). However, he later equates *samādhijaṃ* with *ekodibhāva* as synonymous terms reinforcing the importance of one-pointedness in second *jhāna*. Ibid., p. 178. Furthermore, the analogy with first *jhāna*, described as *vivekajaṃ* makes it clear that the reference of words in "*-jaṃ*" is to the factor that effects the transition, and not to a factor in the preceding *jhāna*.

74. Such meditation is practiced in all the major world religions as, for example, in Christian meditation on the cross.

75. See notes 37 to 47 above.

76. Vism #190.

77. M i. 294–295, translated as *The Middle Length Sayings* by I.B. Horner (London: Luzac, 1954), p. 354.

78. Vism #141. *The Path of Purification*, p. 147.

79. *Peṭakopadesa*, 161. *The Piṭaka-Disclosure*, p. 220

80. E.g., at Vism #141. *The Path of Purification*, p. 147. See also *The Expositor*, p. 221 Gunaratana argues that the *hindrances* were limited to five out of many such possible "factors of abandoning" because there were only five *jhāna* factors with which to correlate them (Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis for the Jhānas*, p. 58). I argue just the opposite, that *five jhāna* factors were required because there already existed a well known far more ancient list of five hindrances which were said to be overcome in first *jhāna*. Cf. footnote 86 below.

81. The *jhāna* factors are not alone in counteracting the hindrances. At S v. 105–106 there occurs a set of five "wise considerations" which are also said to eliminate the five hindrances.

82. Gunaratana, for example, says the *vitakka* which counters sloth and torpor is "of a high quality and specialized function"! Gunaratana, *Critical Analysis of the Jhānas*, p. 151.

83. Ibid., p. 151. The idea that *vicāra* could be "directed to *jhāna*" seems part of an attempt to provide *vicāra* with a new meaning, as a form of concentration, in order for it to be compatible with *ekaggatā*.

84. *The Path of Freedom*, p. 93.

85. For a detailed discussion of this development see Bucknell and Stuart-Fox, *The Twilight Language*, chapter 6.

86. The five hindrances are found in the earliest sections of the *Suttapiṭaka*, e.g., at D i. 71–73, in the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*. See Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*, p. 114.

87. *Kathā-vatthu*; translated as *Points of Controversy* by S.Z. Aung and C.A.F. Rhys Davids (London: Luzac, 1960), pp. 327–330.

88. In the summary which follows, I have drawn heavily on the work of Sukumar Dutt. See both *The Buddha and Five After-Centuries* (London: Luzac, 1957) and *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962).

89. Dutt, *The Buddha and Five After-Centuries*, p. 92.

90. A iii. 355. The significance of this text was remarked upon by Louis de la Vallée Poussin in "Musila et Nārada: le chemin du Nirvāna," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 5 (1937): 189–222.

91. A trend culminating in the method of Nāgārjuna. It seems likely that this intellectual trend was encouraged by the Brahmanistic concept of *jñāna-yoga*.

92. A iii. 355, translated as *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, vol 3 by E.M. Hare (London: The Pali Text Society, 1934), p. 252.

93. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, "Dhyāna in Early Buddhism," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 3 (1927), pp. 695–696. I cannot, however, accept the conclusion of this paper that *jhāna* had value over and above that of a state of mental preparation. Rhys Davids criticizes Ānanda (A ii. 195) for taking *jhāna* to be "pure and simple mind practice," and one of four "factors for utter purification." But these factors—*sīla, samādhi, paññā, vimutti*—together comprise a statement of the Path. *Samādhi* (= four *jhānas*) is here, as elsewhere, a preparatory stage.

94. Further indirect evidence for the decline of the *Jhāyin* tradition comes from the decline both in status and numbers of the *arhat* in early Buddhism. Pande calls this decline "the most hotly debated point in the whole range of early sectarian controversy." Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*, p. 564.

95. Rod Bucknell and I have argued that knowledge of how to practice the higher meditative techniques became confined to an esoteric transmission in early Buddhism. See Rod Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, "Did the Buddha impart an Esoteric Teaching?", *Journal of Indian History* 61 (1983), pp. 1–17; also Bucknell and Stuart-Fox, *The Twilight Language*, chapter 2.

96. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, *The Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism* (London: Luzac, 1936), p. 333.

97. Gunaratana, *Critical Analysis of the Jhānas*, p. 216, makes this statement after devoting a whole thesis to precisely such an intellectual treatment of the *jhānas*.

1975 *Thai Buddhism: Its Rites and Customs.* Bangkok: Suriyabun. (Second ed.)

Wilson, H.H.

1828 "Notices on Three Tracts Received from Nepal," *Asiatic Researches,* 16, 450–478.

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The *Kathāvatthu Niyāma* Debates*

by James P. McDermott

A series of debates concerning what has been variously translated as "assurance," "fixity," "destiny," and "certitude" (Pali: *niyāma*. Cf. the related *niyata*) is scattered widely through the *Kathāvatthuppakaraṇa*.[1] These controversies are primarily concerned with the implications of entry into the way of deliverance. According to the *Kathāvatthupakaraṇa Aṭṭhakathā*, the Andhakas, their sub-groups the Aparaseliyas and Pubbaseliyas, and the Uttarāpathakas, as well as the Theravādins were involved in the controversies over *niyāma*. The purpose of this paper is to undertake a systematic analysis of the *Kathāvatthu niyāma* debates in order to determine the fundamental underlying doctrinal concerns.

The first debate centered on *niyāma* occurs at *Kvu* IV.8. The controversy focuses on the implications of an account from the *Ghaṭīkāra Sutta* (*M* II.45ff.). According to this text the *Bodhisatta* was born as a brahmin, Jotipāla, during the lifetime of Kassapa Buddha. His friend, the potter Ghaṭīkāra, invited Jotipāla to go with him to hear Kassapa Buddha preach. Jotipāla refused, insulting Kassapa Buddha in the process. But Ghaṭīkāra did not give in, and one day boldly seizing his higher caste friend by the hair coerced Jotipāla into agreeing to accompany him. Having heard Kassapa Buddha in person, Jotipāla joined the *saṃgha* and became a monk. The *Mahāvastu* relates that Jotipāla expressed his aspiration to become a Buddha himself in the presence of Kassapa Buddha (*Mhvu.* I.319ff, esp. I.335), who then prophesied Jotipāla's eventual enlightenment.

The point at issue at *Kvu* IV.8 concerns whether it is proper to speak of Jotipāla's entry on the path of assurance (*niyāma okkanti*) under the teaching (*pāvacana*) of the Buddha Kassapa.

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The Andhakas and Uttarāpathakas maintained the affirmative.[2] The Theravādins, to the contrary, argued that to so hold would imply that the Buddha-to-be must have been a disciple of Kassapa, which would conflict with the concept of a Buddha as self-developed (*sayambhu*), as one who discovers the path for himself without the aid of a teacher.

Buddhaghosa's commentary clarifies the meaning of *niyāma* in this context: "*Niyāma* and *brahmacariya* (the religious life) are equivalents for the noble (four-stage) path. And there is no entrance on that path for *bodhisattas*, except when they are fulfilling the perfections . . ." (*KvuA* IV.8). Thus it becomes clear from the Theravāda perspective that the Buddha-to-be could not have undertaken the austerities which he did prior to his enlightenment in his last life had he already entered the path of assurance (*niyāma*); for this is a middle path between the extremes of self-indulgence, on the one hand, and radical asceticism, on the other.[3]

An important implication of the commentary to this controversy, though it is not clear from the *Kathāvatthu* text itself, is that the Theravādin is concerned to avoid falling into the admission of predeterminism or a concept of fixed destiny. Thus, when Buddhaghosa writes: "Buddhas prophesy: 'he will become a Buddha' simply by the might of their own insight,"[4] his point is that Kassapa's prophecy concerning Jotipāla is to be seen simply as an enlightened prediction, an example of a Buddha's insight into the passing of beings according to their own *kamma*, rather than as determining his future destiny.

The commentary to *Kvu* XIII.4 further underlines this point. It suggests that when a Buddha makes such a prophecy about an individual, this *bodhisatta* "may be called assured (*niyata*) by reason of the cumulative growth of merit."[5]

The desire to avoid implying a concept of fixed destiny implicitly seems to underlie the Theravādin argument at *Kvu* VI.1 as well. Here the debate concerns whether *niyāma* is unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*). The Andhakas,[6] among others, contend that assurance or fixedness on the path (*niyāma*) is unconditioned. The intent is to maintain that once one is fixed on the path so as to assure its fruition, the nature of this assurance is such that it cannot cease. To argue otherwise is to claim that assurance is no assurance. The Theravādin objection is that to use the term "unconditioned" in this way wrongly makes assurance (*niyāma*) equivalent to *nibbāna*, which alone in the Theravādin view is to be classified as unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*). Such an equivalence must be avoided because, as *Dhammasaṅgani* 983 makes clear, the unconditioned element is morally indeterminate, ethically neutral (*avyākatā*). The unconditioned stands above the sphere of moral causation. Once this state is achieved, no further kammic effect is worked on the individual. To maintain that this was equally true of entering the path of assurance inevitably would seem to lead to a concept of determinism.

In light of a distinction basic to the arguments at *Kvu* XIII. 3 and 4, and, to a lesser extent, *Kvu* VI.1 as well, it becomes more obvious still that *niyāma* (assurance) cannot imply a determinism beyond moral causation. The debate at *Kvu* XIII.4 centers on whether one who is assured (*niyata*) enters the path of assurance (*niyāmaṃ okkamati*). The Pubbaseliyas and Aparaseliyas argue the affirmative (*KvuA* XIII.4.). The Theravādin, to the contrary, distinguishes between assurance (*niyāma*) of two types, depending on whether it is in the right (*sammatta niyāma*) or wrong (*micchatta niyāma*) direction. The former is the noble path which ends in arahantship. The latter, which results from committing one of the five cardinal crimes (*ānantarika kamma*)—namely: 1) patricide, 2) matricide, 3) killing an *arahant*, 4) wounding a Buddha, or 5) causing a schism in the Buddhist *saṃgha*. (*A* V.129)—leads to immediate retribution. As the commentary notes, apart from these two categories, no other mental phenomena are invariably fixed (*KvuA* XIII.4.).

Kathāvatthu XIII.3 deals with a special case in the application of the concept of immediate retribution. The issue concerns cases where an individual instigates one of the five crimes resulting in immediate retribution on death. The Uttarāpathakas were fully consistent in insisting that one who had instigated such a crime could not enter on the right path of assurance (*sammata niyāma*). The Theravādin, however, on the basis of a concept of complete *kamma* recognized special circumstances under which it might be possible for such an individual to enter the right path of assurance (*sammatta niyāma*).

In his commentary, Buddhaghosa notes that the Theravādin position distinguishes between two ways in which one can instigate a cardinal crime, namely 1) through a permanent,

standing injunction involving a consistent attitude and on-going effort, or 2) through an occasional or impulsive injunction (*KvuA* XIII.3.). Both parties to the debate agree there is no question that the former way assures one's doom, because there is volition to carry through. In the latter case, however, the Theravādin considers remorse and reform possible.[6]

For the Uttarāpathaka, even this provides no escape from the inevitability of immediate retribution on death, and no possibility for entry on the right path of assurance. His reasoning is that remorse (*kukkucca*) and the agitation and distraction (*uddhacca*) that accompany it constitute one of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*).[7] The hindrances blind our mental vision so that we can neither work for our own benefit nor for that of others. In their presence, neither absorption concentration (*appanā samādhi*) nor access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) is possible. Each of the hindrances must be permanently overcome to attain arahantship, and hence, the Uttarāpathaka would argue, assurance (*niyāma*) on the right path.

In opposition the Theravādin imagines a hypothetical case in which, perhaps on impulse, someone encourages another to commit one of the four crimes entailing immediate retribution on death. What if the instigator repents and backs out before the actual crime is ever committed? Or perhaps, for whatever reason, the crime is never committed and the instigator comes to regret his evil intention. In such a case, the Theravadin maintains, having come to his senses, the instigator might eventually overcome his agitation and feelings of remorse. It then could be possible for him to enter onto the path of proper assurance.

While the Uttarāpathaka position is intended to underscore the heinous nature of the five cardinal crimes, the Theravādins recognized that, at least to a certain extent, the ethical potential of a deed can be counteracted by repentance. Since *kamma* is defined as the intentional impulse (*cetanā*) and the act which follows upon it, the removal of either or both inevitably lessens the seriousness of the act and reduces its kammic impact.[8]

As I have noted elsewhere, the specific issue at *Kvu* XIII.3 is but one aspect of a broader controversy which is the focus of twin debates recorded at *Kvu* XXI.7 and 8.[9] *Kathāvatthu* XXI.8 deals with a thesis shared by the Andhakas and Uttarāpathakas (*KvuA* XXI.8.) that all *kamma* is fixed (*niyata*) in its consequences.

Certain acts by nature bear fruits that ripen in this life, while others ripen in the next life, and still a third type of *kamma* ripens in succeeding existences. Since the three types are not convertible one into another, they must be said to be fixed (*niyata*) in their consequences. To the proponents of this position, this implies that certain fixed consequences are bound to follow as a result of any given deed, and that the same kammic effects will be produced whenever that deed is committed. To the Theravādin this view seems to imply that all action leads either to assurance in the right direction (*sammatta niyāma*) or assurance in the wrong direction (*micchatta niyāma*). Since, as we have already seen above, only commission of one of the crimes entailing immediate retribution on death (*ānantarika kamma*) leads to *micchatta niyāma*, a whole additional category of wrongful acts which do not entail fixed (*niyata*) consequences must be posited. Similarly, not every good deed guarantees attainment of *nibbāna* or entry on the path of assurance (*niyāma okkanti*). In fact, concludes the Theravādin, the vast majority of human actions cannot be spoken of as having predetermined consequences, their fruits being colored by the overall character and moral habit of those who do them, as well as by the circumstances involved.

In the twin to this debate about fixed *kamma*, the issue is whether all phenomena are fixed by nature. The Pāli reads: *sabbe dhammā niyatā 'ti?* (*Kvu* XXI.7.) Again the Andhakas and certain Uttarāpathakas assert the affirmative (*KvuA* XXI.7.). Their point seems to be a simple one: No matter how much any phenomenon (*dhamma*) may change, it never gives up its fundamental nature. To illustrate: matter is material by nature. It cannot be otherwise. It can be nothing but matter. That by nature it cannot be a mental phenomenon goes almost without saying. It cannot have the nature of feeling, consciousness, or the like. Thus it is said to be fixed (*niyata*). All other *dhammas* are similarly conceived to be fixed, of immutable nature.

The Theravādin rejects this apparently straightforward view. From his perspective to claim that all *dhammas* are fixed (*niyata*) amounts to a claim of moral determinism; that is, to a claim that all phenomena are fixed in terms of their rightness (*sammatta niyata*) or wrongness (*micchatta niyata*). In other words, this would amount to holding that every *dhamma* belongs either

to the category of wrong entailing fixed evil results or to the category of right entailing fixed good results. Such is contrary to the *sutta* where three categories (*rāsi*) are enumerated, namely: 1) *micchatta niyato rāsi*, 2) *sammatta niyato rāsi*, and 3) *aniyato rāsi*, the last and by far the largest of these categories consisting of that which is not immutably fixed.[10]

According to the commentary (*KvuA* V.4 & XIX.7.), the Uttarāpathakas are the proponents of two related theses debated at *Kvu* V.4 and XIX.7 respectively. The former controversy focuses on the Uttarāpathaka claim that "in one not fixed (*aniyata*) [on the path] there is insight (*ñāṇa*) for going on to assurance (*niyāma gamanāya*)." The rejoinder treats this as a claim that only the ordinary individual not yet engaged on the path is capable of developing the insight necessary to assure achievement of the goal, whereas the path is in fact restricted to those who have already attained assurance. The point of the thesis, rather, is that even in one not yet fixed in his pursuit of that path, the possibility of developing the insight necessary for success may nonetheless exist. S.Z. Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids have described this debate as "a curious bout of ancient dialectic. At the end of each section the sectary is brought up against the same rejoinder, compelling him either to contradict his proposition or to withdraw."[11] As Buddhaghosa's commentary suggests (*KvuA* V.4.), the contention stems from the Theravādin use of the term "assurance" (*niyāma*) as a synonym for the path or way to arahantship. Thus the Theravādin argument is ultimately little more than the simple claim that only one already engaged on the path is assuredly on the path.

Kathāvatthu XIX.7 concerns *accanta niyāmato* in the case of an ordinary person (*puthujjana*). As *The Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary* notes, the term *accanta* can be variously translated as 1) "uninterrupted, continuous, perpetual," or 2) "final, absolute, complete."[12] The Uttarāpathakas hold that in the case of a member of *'oi polloi* there is *accanta niyāmatā*. If this is to be taken as a claim that the entrance of such an individual on the path is assured, this is to be denied; for members of the masses are capable of the worst of crimes. If, on the other hand, the thesis is to be read as a claim that the assurance of immediate retribution on death which follows upon commission of a cardinal crime is perpetual, it must be denied as well; for this assurance of retribution extends to the immediately following existence only (*KvuA* XIX.7.). Finally, if the proposition be taken to assert that a member of *'oi polloi* can feel absolute certitude, it must still be rejected because doubt is only put away for good by one who has entered the path, something that the ordinary person (*puthujjana*) by definition has not done.

In defense of his position the Uttarāpathaka cites *A* IV.11: "Consider the person whose ways are wholly black and evil; it is thus, monks, he plunges once [—that is, once and for all—] and drowns."[13] The Theravādin denies that this passage is relevant. This denial is clarified by Buddhaghosa's commentary, which suggests that the Uttarāpathaka has relied too much on the letter (*vacana*) of the text at the expense of its spirit (*attho*).[14]

The *Kathāvatthu niyāma* debates are thus seen to provide clarification of what entry onto the path of assurance involves. They further distinguish assurance in the right direction (*sammatta niyāma*) from the assurance (*micchatta niyāma*) of immediate retribution which results from *ānantarika kamma*. But why the scholastic interest in these issues which in and of themselves seem to be of relatively minor import? The answer would seem to lie in the recognition that the concept of assurance or the admission of fixed states of any kind other than *nibbāna* itself can lead all too easily to the heresies of fatalism/determinism (*niyativāda*), or the belief that "all beings, all that have breath, all that are born, all that have life are without power, strength, energy; have evolved according to destiny (*niyati*), species (*saṅgati*) and nature (*bhāva*)."[15] In the *Sāmmaññaphala Sutta* (*D* I.53.) this view is attributed to Makkhali Gosāla. Thus the *niyāma* debates, at least in part, seem formulated implicitly to avoid falling into the trap of Ājīvika determinism.

NOTES

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1. *Kvu* IV.8, V.4, VI.1, XIII.3–4, XIX.7, and XXI.7–8. In preparing

this essay the following editions of the Pāli texts of the *Kathāvatthu* and its commentaries have been used: Bhikkhu J. Kashyap, ed. *The Kathāvatthu*, Nālandā Devanāgarī Pāli Series (Pāli Publication Board, Bihar Government, 1961); Mahesh Tiwary, ed. *The Pañcappakarana-Aṭṭhakathā, Vol. II; Kathāvatthu-Aṭṭhakathā*. (Nālandā, Patna: Nava Nālandā Mahāvihāra, 1971); Burmese script edition of the *Kathāvatthu Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* from the *Pañcapakaraṇamūlaṭīkā* and *Pañcapakaraṇānuṭīkā* (1960). The *Mūlaṭīkā* and *Anuṭīkā* have been consulted throughout. They add little of significance to the philosophical understanding of the text.

2. See *KvuA* IV.7 and IV.8.

3. The story of Jotipāla seems to have been particularly problematic for the Buddhists, since it is also a subject of concern to King Milinda in the *Milindapañha* (*Miln* 221–233.). There, however, the issue is different, being concerned with how someone of Jotipāla's attainments could have abused the Buddha Kassapa. Nāgasena's solution to the dilemma, it is to be noted, is not fully consistent with the usual understanding of how *kamma* operates.

4. *KvuA* IV.8 as trans. by Shwe Zan Aung & Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Points of Controversy, or Subjects of Discourse* (London: Luzac for P.T.S., 1960 reprint of 1915 ed.), 168, and adopted by Bimala Churn Law, *The Debates Commentary*, Pāli Text Translation Series, No. 28 (London: Luzac for P.T.S., 1969 reprint of 1940 ed.), 97.

5. As trans. by Aung and Rhys Davids, *Points of Controversy*, 275, and adopted by Law, *Debates Commentary*, 175. Aung and Rhys Davids read *puññ'n-sadattā* for *puññassa datvā*. See 275, fn. 3.

6. See *KvuA* VI.1.

7. On the *nīvaraṇas* see *D* I.73, *A* I.3, *S* II.23, and *M* I.60, for example. Also see Ñāṇaponika Thera, *The Five Mental Hindrances*, Wheel Publication No. 26 (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1961).

8. See James P. McDermott, "Karma and Rebirth in Early Buddhism," in Wendy D. O'Flaherty, ed. *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980; Indian ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 187–189 on the concept of complete *kamma* in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and the *Abhidharmakośa*.

9. See James P. McDermott, "The Kathāvatthu Kamma Debates," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 95.3 (1975), 429–430.

10. See *D* III.217. Cf. *Netti* 96.

11. Aung and Rhys Davids, *Points of Controversy*, 178, fn. 1.

12. T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *P.E.D.* (London: Luzac for P.T.S., 1966 reprint of 1921–1925 ed.), s.v.

13. As trans. by E.M. Hare, *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, Vol. IV, P.T.S. Translation Series, No. 26 (London: P.T.S.; distr. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978 reprint of 1935 ed.), 7. Parenthesis added by this writer following the reading of *KvuA* XIX.7.

14. See *KvuA* XIX.7.

15. *D* I.53 as trans. by David J. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975), 33. On the perceptive translation of *saṅgati* as "species" see *ibid.*, 33–36.

II. SHORT PAPERS